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THE GREAT SIEGE



GENERAL NOGI

1881
THE GREAT SIEGE

THE INVESTMENT AND FALL OF
PORT ARTHUR

BY
B. W. NORREGAARD

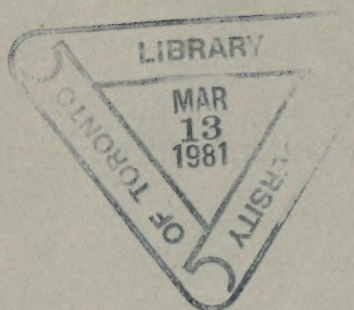
WITH MAPS, PLANS AND TWENTY-FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

THE siege of Port Arthur forms a well-defined episode, separated from and practically independent of the other events of the great war between Russia and Japan. Clear in outline and complete in itself, it stands out in bold relief from the more complex and intricate operations at the main theatre of war. As all the fighting took place over a comparatively small area, the events of the siege have been easy to follow and understand. I, as correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, had the privilege of watching the operations from the first day to the capitulation.

From a military point of view the siege of Port Arthur derives its greatest interest from the fact that it is the first regular siege that has been carried out against a modern fortress during the last half century. The science of modern military engineering, all its new improvements in the art of fortification and in the means of destruction, have here stood their first practical test, and the question of the chances of the offensive against the defensive under modern conditions has to a large extent been solved. Experts in artillery and military engineering have been watching the progress of the siege, as naval experts have watched the fighting at sea in this war, and with perhaps still keener interest, because while modern battleships, cruisers, and torpedo boats have been exposed to practical tests in fairly recent times, no real

fortress has been besieged since the days of Sebastopol fifty years ago, so that there have been a hundred different important problems, the solution of which had no precedent and could be ascertained solely by practical experiments.

But apart from the purely military interest attaching to the siege of Port Arthur, this great struggle forms, from a human point of view, a most fascinating study, with all its dramatic episodes and stirring events, with all its sufferings and heroic devotion, with its ruses and bold strokes, its cleverly thought-out moves and counter-moves, where wit was pitched against wit, and the opponents vied with each other in displaying the most wonderful gallantry and the most stubborn endurance.

While, therefore, in the following pages I have tried to give a complete *exposé* of the military moves and dispositions, and to discuss the ways and means adopted by the Japanese for their great undertaking, I have not forgotten the more human side of the picture, but have endeavoured to make the events stand out with something of the dramatic force and vividness with which they happened.

B. W. N.

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For the snapshot of General Nogi and several of the other photographs the author is indebted to Mr. J. Rosenthal, London.

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MR. B. W. NORREGAARD

THE GREAT SIEGE

THE INVESTMENT AND FALL OF PORT ARTHUR

CHAPTER I

KUANG-TUNG PENINSULA

THE few foreign correspondents who were attached to the 3rd Imperial Japanese Army landed in Dalny on August 3rd. On that date the Russians had been driven back behind their lines of permanent fortifications around Port Arthur, and the Japanese had occupied strong offensive positions about three or four thousand yards from the fortress, and were preparing for a vigorous assault. Until these preparations had been completed, we were not allowed to the front, but had, for two weeks, to be content with listening to the far-off booming of the guns by day and watching the blueish-white rays from the searchlights shooting across the sky at night.

Meanwhile we were taken round to the different places in the country, from Nanshan and southwards, where fighting had taken place, and the strategical and tactical operations and dispositions were explained to us on the spot. We walked all over the battle-fields and the whole theatre of operations, and gained a thorough knowledge of the

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country, which not only greatly contributed to give us a clear understanding of the military events, but also opened our eyes to the magnitude of the stake for which Russia was fighting, and to the large amount of work, brains, and money which she had invested in her new colony.

We landed, as I have said, in Dalny. I had been there before, but only for a day, when journeying from China *viâ* Siberia to Europe, and had had little time or opportunity for studying this unique and most interesting place. We stayed there now for five or six days, and though half the town was in ruins and nothing remained of the former gay and busy life, I obtained a much fuller impression of what Russia had invested in this place. For here, at last, she had acquired an open, ice-free port, an outlet for the immense realm which she had built up in Northern Asia.

Sprung full-grown into life in shorter time than any American mushroom city; created in one man's brain and built by a word from his mouth; a few Chinese fishermen's huts one year, a chaos of scaffoldings and bricks and mortar the next year or two, and before the end of the third year a fine-looking town with well-laid-out streets, excellently metalled, with gardens and parks, water-works and electric light, snug, cosy-looking villas and monumental public buildings, two good hotels and a cathedral, docks and piers and granite-bounded wharves; a beautiful town, teeming with life, a completely Western city in the wilderness of the rocks and hills of far-away Kuang-tung; a rush into life, an artificially forced growth, quicker than any history can relate, and then stagnation and a standstill,—such is the history of Dalny, unique in the annals of the world, of Dalny, the “far-away place.”



VIEW OF DALNY

When the Trans-Manchurian railway was being built, with French gold, by Russian hands, through Chinese territory, the first plan was to make Port Arthur its terminus. But the harbour of Port Arthur, it soon became evident, was not large or commodious enough to hold all the traffic which was expected to grow out of the Trans-Siberian trade, and as Russia saw fit, or saw herself forced, largely to increase her naval strength in Pacific waters, the harbour soon became inadequate to accommodate much more than the fleet. It was, besides, deemed unwise to have the great commercial port bound up with the fate of the naval station, and so de Witte, the then all-powerful Minister, decided to find another terminus for his railway. His choice fell on a place on the shores of Talien Bay* which, broad and large and deep, cuts into the Kuang-tung peninsula not more than some twenty or thirty miles up the coast from Port Arthur. The bay is large enough to hold all the ships of the world. It is somewhat exposed to easterly winds; but a large breakwater, costing about three million pounds, was constructed, forming an inner harbour where ships could anchor practically sheltered against wind and waves.

So the town was planned and built, and given the name of Dalny ("far away"), the nearest Russian equivalent for Talien. It was built with a lavish hand, and nothing was spared to make it a worthy entrance gate to the longest continuous land communication of the world. It rose with towers and turrets and ornamental gables; it was filled with pretty villas in luxurious gardens, and it came to look as its founder had dreamt and willed.

* Talienwan; *Wan* in Chinese means "bay."

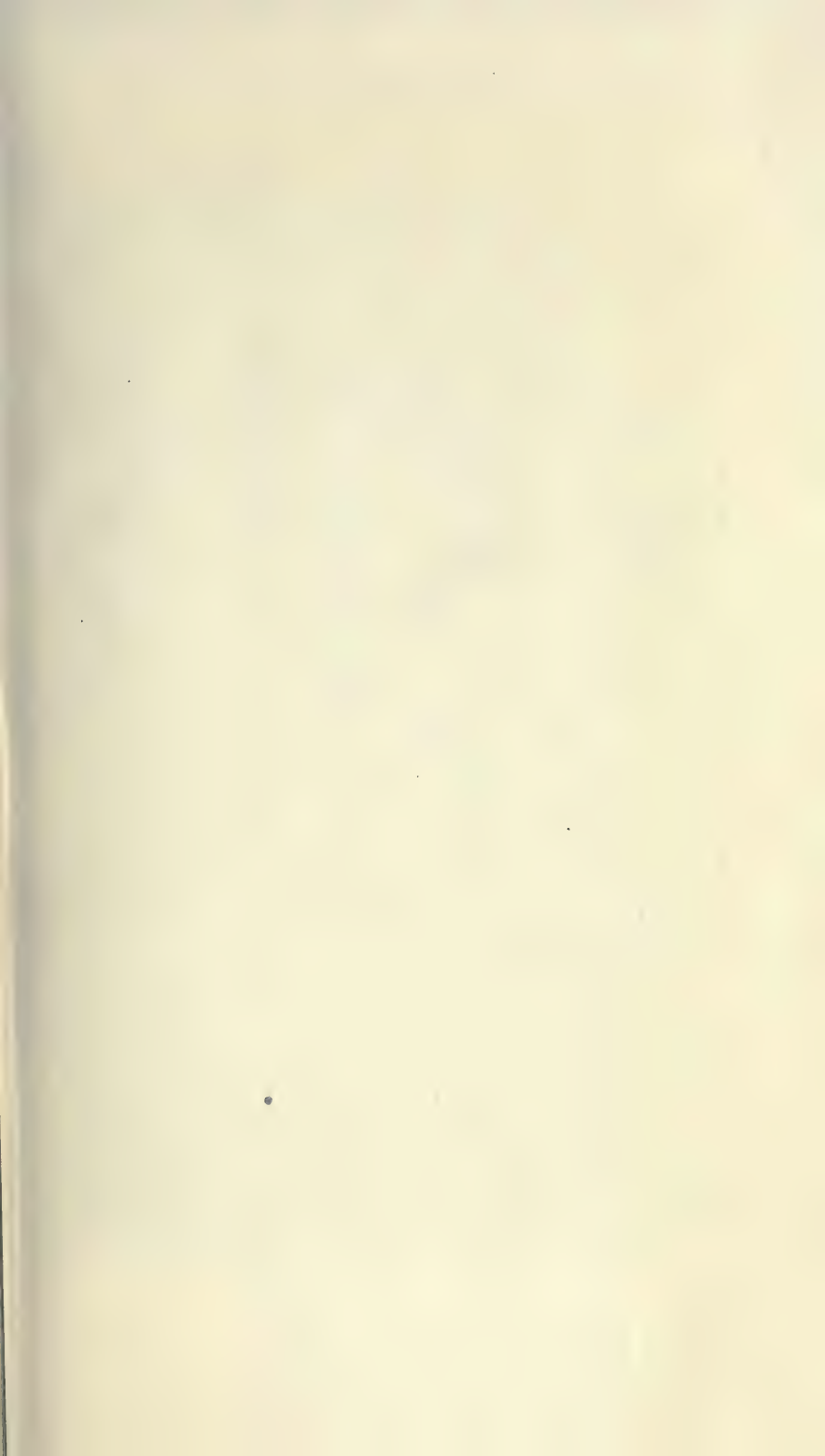


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But the new town did not thrive. Peter the Great could build St. Petersburg on the swampy marshes of the Neva, and compel a large population to leave their homes in many provinces and townships from all over Russia and settle down in these bleak, inhospitable regions. A powerful minister like de Witte had been able to conjure a modern city up from the ground, but to populate it he had not the power, at least not with the class of people he would like to see settled there. The town did not develop out of any inner necessity, or because conditions of trade made its existence desirable; it has, in a sense, been forced upon the world, and the world does not take such acts of violence in good grace. Port Arthur was the old-established place; it held a large garrison and quite a number of firms, Russian, English, German and Danish, were established there and did a roaring trade.

Although Port Arthur, at least what there existed of it, the "old town," was a dismal place devoid of every feature, in the way of handsome buildings or gardens or hotels or such like, which could make it attractive—I would rather live in a Chinese inn than in one of Port Arthur's "gastinitzas"—yet, because it was the garrison city, it was so much gayer and brighter than pretty dull Dalny, that everybody wanted to live there and so Port Arthur thrived and Dalny had no chance. The merchants kept away, and only the officials connected with the Government service, the railway, the docks, and so forth, came to live there, though house-rent was very cheap.

Things became worse still when Admiral Alexeieff was made Viceroy and fixed his residence in Port Arthur, and when at the same time de Witte temporarily lost his power and his





CHINESE FIRE-TRUCK IN DALNY

influence. Alexeieff took but little interest in Dalny. His plan was to make Port Arthur not only the main naval station, but also the chief commercial port of Manchuria. For that purpose he set on foot extensive dredging operations in the shallow western part of the inner harbour, and from the end of this he commenced digging a canal across the low, narrow neck of the Tiger's Tail peninsula, which was to form the shipping entrance to the port, while the entrance for the men-of-war remained the old narrow sound between the Golden Hill and the Tiger's Tail promontory. On the shores of the inner basin a new city was laid out; many large buildings for the civil administration, banks, hospitals, &c., were erected here; all the inhabitants of the old town had been ordered to move to the new town before July, 1904, and nothing but barracks and other military establishments were to remain. Many houses and villas, a sumptuous hotel and large shops were built, a park was laid out and the foundations laid for a fine cathedral; in short, the new Port Arthur rivalled Dalny both in outward appearance and modern resources.

For a short time it seemed as if Dalny was doomed; there was complete stagnation; but as the military forces in Kuang-tung steadily increased and Port Arthur was unable to hold them all, a couple of regiments were quartered in Dalny, and with the troops, life and activity followed. Although still far from approaching the older place in importance as a commercial centre, Dalny had luckily got over the stagnation period, and was in a fair way of development when the war broke out.

To the inhabitants of Dalny the Russian reverse at Nanshan came as a complete surprise. Never

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had they believed that the Japanese would be able to storm the strong position. Life had gone on quite unconcernedly, when suddenly, on the evening of May 26th, the Mayor of Dalny received a telegram ordering him to have the town evacuated and the inhabitants conveyed to Port Arthur by four o'clock next morning. Imagine their feelings, as they had to leave their homes and all their belongings and hurry to the railway station in the middle of the night, packed in crowded cars and taken to the neighbouring town. In the hurry and confusion little time was left for making arrangements to prevent their possessions from falling into the hands of the detested Japanese. Some probably thought that the fortunes of war would soon change so that they could return to their own houses. Nearly all the public buildings, the large workshops, and the electric power-house were fired and more or less ruined by flames; the dock and the water-works were also partially destroyed. What remained from the fire was looted by the Chinese rabble left in the place, and by the Hunghutzes. From their mountain fastnesses the Hunghutzes came riding into the town on their small wiry ponies with old flintlocks or, in some cases, new army rifles slung over their shoulders, and perhaps a couple of live chickens dangling from the pommels of their saddles. With a swaggering gait they walked through the streets; they entered the houses and drank the wine and the liquors; they slept, for the first time in their lives on spring mattresses in feather beds; they broke the furniture, and took away with them all they could carry, and enjoyed, all round, a great old time. Poor fellows! I do not blame them. Life as highway-robbers, even in Manchuria, is

none too gay or comfortable. These days in Dalny must have been the one great time in their lives—and to the Russians it was a matter of complete indifference whether their property went to the Japanese or to their allies, the Hunghutzes.

It is apparent, therefore, that the Dalny I saw in 1904 was utterly different from the Dalny of the year before. I remember it well, with its gay, debonair life of former days. In the afternoon the band played in the park; officers in their handsome uniforms, with clanking swords, and jingling spurs on well-polished top boots, promenaded with more or less well-dressed ladies, listening to the music or watching the tennis players; in the streets droshkies and private carriages, driven at a furious pace, took the ladies of the two *mondes* for their evening promenade. In the evening there were gay dinner and supper parties at the hotels, where the champagne flowed and where jewels sparkled. The Russian officer is certainly not miserly. When he has money, he spends it freely. Sick and tired of the tedious life in the forts and outposts, he flies to town now and again when he has received his salary, and makes the roubles dance for a few mad hours, till the last has slipped out of his purse, when, with a light heart and a heavy head, he again returns to duty and dullness.

The women I saw were of two kinds—married ladies, mostly Russian (in impossible toilettes) and generally very *bourgeoise*; and the others, mostly quite the reverse, and for the greater part hailing from the sunny countries along the Lower Danube, soft-eyed, merry little things, who were excellent partners in the game of the dancing roubles.

THE SIEGE OF PORT ARTHUR

At my last visit all this was changed. Away were the dashing officers, away, alas, those with the soft eyes. The former I saw again six months after, some stretched out, stiff and cold, on the bleak hill-sides of Port Arthur, others as prisoners of war or in hospital; the latter I did not see till the entry of the victorious Japanese army into Port Arthur. It was difficult to recognize in the demure, soberly dressed damsels with the Red Cross badges round their arms the bright butterflies of a year ago. The whole gay throng had disappeared, and instead the streets were full of loud-voiced, light-hearted Chinese coolies and square-jawed, business-looking Japanese soldiers. From two different sides long columns were coming into the town,—from the port an interminable succession of clumsy Chinese carts, heavily laden with commissariat stuff, and detachment after detachment of fresh troops for the front; from the railway station a never-ceasing stream of sick and wounded for the hospitals, carried on stretchers by stalwart Chinese coolies.

As Dalny was built with the idea that it should be the principal trading centre in the Russian Far Eastern possessions, so Port Arthur was to be the principal military and naval station in the newly-acquired realm. But it must be remembered that the fortress of Port Arthur, as it stood on the day of the outbreak of the war, and even as it was four months later, when the Japanese besieging army were standing outside its gates, was only in embryo. In the Russian scheme of defence the fortress of Port Arthur formed only an integral, though certainly a most vital, part. Their idea was to make the whole Kuang-tung peninsula an immense fortified military camp, and the official

name of the place was therefore not "the fortress of Port Arthur," but "the fortified district of Kuang-tung."

With a fleet strong enough, with the assistance of mines and submarines, to make a landing of hostile troops on the peninsula impossible, a more ideal place for a prolonged defence could scarcely be found on the face of the earth.

Joined to the mainland by the narrow neck to the south of Kinchow, where the excellent position, Nanshan, barred the way to an attacking force, the peninsula expands to a width of some twelve or thirteen miles and attains a length of some twenty-five miles. It presents a series of excellent defensive positions, one behind the other, where even a comparatively weak land force, supported by a strong fleet, would have been able to withstand the attack of vastly superior forces, because the sea on both sides would prevent any turning movement on a larger scale. Every foot of the ground would have to be bought with heavy sacrifices, as every one of the positions would have to be taken by frontal attacks. The further forwards the attackers were able to push, the stronger the positions would become, until a double line of permanent fortifications would face them, and force them to sit down to a regular siege. Properly fortified and provisioned, these inner lines, which were to be constructed on the naturally immensely strong positions surrounding the town and the harbour, would be practically impregnable, or at least be able to keep an enemy at bay for years, and the fortified district of Kuang-tung would become one of the two or three strongest fortresses of the world.

During the six years Russia had been in possession of the Kuang-tung peninsula very little

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of these plans had, however, been carried out. There had been endless correspondence forwards and backwards between Port Arthur and St. Petersburg, and a number of plans had been submitted for approval, and rejected or sent back with new suggestions and proposals. It was only shortly before the outbreak of the war that a complete system had been decided upon, which was to be finished within a period of five years. The Russians did not for a moment believe that Japan would dare to declare war, and they thought they would have ample time to carry out their plans undisturbed. The result was that, when the Japanese fleet made its first attack on the Russian squadron at Port Arthur on February 8th, the "fortress of Port Arthur" did not, really speaking, exist, much less any "fortified district of Kuangtung." The old Chinese forts, of which only a few were of any real value against a modern army, were the only defence works to oppose an enemy's attack from land, and even these were to a large extent depleted of guns, or armed with old-fashioned cannon. If, simultaneously with the attack on the fleet, the Japanese had landed 10,000 men on the peninsula, there is little doubt that they could have taken the whole place by surprise, and marched practically unopposed straight into the town, where the whole garrison consisted of less than 3,000 men.

Of course, as soon as the first attack of the Japanese had taken place, a large number of troops and immense supplies of provisions and ammunition were hurriedly sent to Port Arthur, and the construction of the fortifications was commenced and carried out with feverish haste according to the excellent plans of Colonel Rashefsky of the engineers, and under the capable

supervision of Generals Smyrnoff and Kondratienko ; but, as I will show later, there was only time to have a small portion of the fortifications built as permanent structures.

By far the greater part of the defence works was of a semi-permanent nature. Work was carried on at Nanshan and Port Arthur, and lighter fieldworks were constructed in several intermediate positions. Of the double line of permanent forts which were planned round Port Arthur there was only time to attempt to complete the inner, extending in a semi-circle to the south of Shuishi valley, while the outer line, which was to have been constructed on the Fenghoangshan range further to the north, had to be completely abandoned. This, as my tale of the siege will bear out, proved most detrimental to successful defence operations, because it enabled the Japanese to place guns within efficient range of the town and the harbour, depriving the garrison of a place of safety where the men could live and work and rest in peace.

CHAPTER II

FROM NANSHAN TO PORT ARTHUR

(See Map, Appendix I)

IT follows from what I have said that it was of the utmost importance for the Russians to keep the Japanese as long as possible away from the permanent lines of defence around Port Arthur, until these fortifications had been put into tolerable shape. From February 8th until the beginning of May, they worked quite undisturbed on the different positions all over the peninsula, and it was only on May 26th that the first attack was made on the most advanced of their defence-works, the strong, semi-permanently fortified position at Nanshan, which was carried by a brilliant assault on the same day. During the next two months a series of attacks and counter-attacks took place on the intermediate positions between Nanshan and Port Arthur. Not until the beginning of August had the Japanese made such progress as to bring them right opposite the real fortress and in a position to attempt an-assault on the Russian stronghold.

Although it is my intention to confine myself to an account of the siege proper, and, as far as possible, to describe and discuss only the military operations which I had an opportunity of seeing and following personally, it is necessary to the full

understanding of the events of the siege to give a short *résumé* of the operations of the opposing armies in the Kuang-tung peninsula, which form the opening chapters of this great drama. I obtained most of my facts from Major Yamaoka, of the Japanese General Staff. This officer was deputed by General Nogi to explain to us the military operations of the Third Army, from the battle of Nanshan to the capture of the final positions before Port Arthur, so that I give therefore what is virtually the Japanese official account of these operations.

The battle of Nanshan was fought on May 26th. The Japanese troops taking part were the 1st, the 3rd and the 4th Army Divisions, which had been landed at Pitzewo in the beginning of May. After the capture of the most important Nanshan position, the 3rd and the 4th Divisions marched north, and from thence became part of the Second (General Oku's) Army. The 1st Division, soon joined by the 11th, formed the nucleus of the Third Army under General Nogi, to whom had been entrusted the task of taking Port Arthur.

General Nogi landed in Yentao Bay on June 1st, and established his headquarters in Pei-pao-tze-ai, a small village some seven miles to the west of Dalny. His forces, with a front twelve or thirteen miles long, stretched right across the Kuang-tung peninsula from coast to coast, from An-tze-shan in the north, across Moto-shitogo to Tai-shuh-shan in the south, the 1st Division forming the right, and the 11th the left wing.

After the defeat of the Russians at Nanshan, General Nogi probably did not anticipate any very determined resistance before reaching the permanent fortifications round Port Arthur. The com-

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paratively easy victory over the Russians in their immensely strong position at Nanshan certainly gave him a right to think so, and to consider the task before him a not very difficult one, especially as he must have had full cognizance of the very deficient state of the fortifications at Port Arthur at the outbreak of the war. It is probable that his reports from this time were to that effect, and it is perfectly certain that the Manchu Maru expedition was sent out in order to give members of the Japanese Diet, the foreign naval attachés and others an opportunity of seeing the fall of Port Arthur, and to convey the Emperor's thanks and congratulations to his victorious Army and Navy through Marquis Kuroda, Vice-President of the Chamber of Peers and one of the most prominent public men in Japan. The Japanese themselves admit so much. Judging from the programme for the tour of the Manchu Maru, the Japanese must have calculated that Port Arthur would be in their hands about the middle of July. That the fortress was able to hold out so much longer may partly be due to the fact that the Vladivostock squadron in its first raid succeeded in sinking three Japanese transports, of which one was carrying siege guns, as well as railway trollies to bring them into position before Port Arthur. It is undoubtedly also due to the very ably conducted campaign of General Stoessel, who stubbornly contested every inch of ground which the Japanese had to cover before they stood right outside of Port Arthur; thereby giving the Russian engineers an additional two months' respite for getting the defences of the fortress into shape.

The Kuang-tung peninsula is hilly. There is very little level ground. Mountains rise behind mountains, hills above hills, forming broken

ranges, separated by narrow valleys, torn by ravines and gorges. The highest part of the peninsula is some miles to the south-west of Dalny, where the two mountains Weitoushan and Kensan rise to a height of some twelve or thirteen hundred feet above the sea level, towering a couple of hundred feet above the surrounding peaks. The direction of the main mountain ranges is generally from north to south, perpendicular on the Japanese line of advance, thereby offering many opportunities for a stubborn resistance. But this advantage is, on the other hand, greatly neutralized by the fact that it would be impossible for any but a very large force to hold the long line from sea to sea, and that everywhere there are passes and defiles, through which an attacking force can make turning movements and cut off the retreat of the defenders. It was obvious, therefore, that the best plan for the Russians would be to take up positions on the crests and the eastern slopes of the mountain ranges and defend them, one after the other, thus harassing and delaying the enemy and forcing him to deploy and fight, and judiciously falling back when in danger of being outflanked and cut off. This is what the Russians did from May 26th up to July 30th, when they were compelled to seek shelter behind the line of permanent fortifications.

For the Japanese advance three roads lead to Port Arthur; to the north, the railway and the main road from Kinchow; to the south, a road along the coast from Dalny; and further a central road, also beginning in Dalny, and continuing through the middle of the peninsula. Although this latter route crosses the hilliest and most broken part of the country, it is fairly level, a

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succession of passes leading through the successive mountain ranges.

The Russians took up positions parallel to those occupied by the Japanese, separated from them by a valley, or several smaller valleys rather, formed by low hills and isolated mounds rising up in the broader expansion of lowland which lies between the ridges occupied by the opposing forces. The distance between their respective positions varied from 3,000 to nearly 6,000 yards. The Russians had massed most of their troops along the railway, which they naturally wished to keep as long as possible, and where they threw up very strong fortifications. They also occupied and fortified the before-mentioned high hills, Weitoushan and Kensan, which became their centre, and smaller detachments of troops guarded every road and pass, with reserves to bear on any point threatened by attack.

Up to June 26th General Nogi did not attempt any serious advance, though skirmishes and smaller outpost affairs took place daily. The reason for this delay was probably that he wanted to have his whole army assembled before he attempted determined offensive operations against an enemy entrenched more strongly and in greater force than he had anticipated. In the meantime he occupied Dalny unopposed. The fleet began dragging for mines in the harbour, and a navigable channel was soon opened, permitting ships to enter, though it was several weeks later before transports and troops could be safely brought in.

It is probable that no forward movement would have been attempted until then, had it not been for the sake of Kensan. This high hill dominates the whole peninsula. From its summit one can

see Dalny, and follow what is happening there, the landing of troops and so on. The Japanese headquarters in Pei-pao-tze-ai and the whole disposition of the Japanese troops could also be clearly seen from this excellent point of observation. The Japanese general saw the importance of preventing this, especially when shipping was recommenced, so he decided on the capture of Kensan. This would also allow him to push his left wing forward to a more favourable position. He would then not only be able to prevent the Russians from seeing what was going on in Dalny and the Japanese lines, but could also, from the top of the hill, observe what was going on in Port Arthur.

So General Nogi decided to attack. On the morning of June 26th, before daybreak, his troops marched against Weitoushan. The Russian defence here seems to have been half-hearted, and at 9 a.m. the hill was in the hands of the Japanese. At Kensan the fighting was more serious, the Russians defending this point vigorously. The mountain stands out well defined from the surrounding hills, and forms a kind of buffer in front of and isolated from the rest of the Russian line of defence. It is rather steep, with rugged sides, and is in many places full of loose boulders and stones, which makes climbing difficult.

The Russians held the position with two battalions of infantry and four quick-firing guns. Later in the day a couple of machine guns were brought up to reinforce these troops. The attacking force, made up of the 43rd Regiment and one mountain battery, were met by a hot fire from three or four Russian gunboats, until the timely arrival of a Japanese squadron forced them to retreat hastily to Port Arthur. On the way two

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mines (*fougasses*) burst amongst the attackers, without, however, doing much damage; but, unchecked by mines or heavy guns, the advance steadily continued. At 3 p.m. the Russians brought their machine guns into action; but these were speedily silenced by shrapnel fire from the Japanese mountain guns, as the quick-firers had been earlier in the day. By half-past five the hill was in the hands of the Japanese, the Russians retreating to the next mountain range, where they took up fresh positions.

As a consequence of the capture of these two hills General Nogi could push his left wing forwards, swinging his whole line, with Antzeshan on his extreme right as a pivot, across Kensan to Sochosan. He at once fortified his new positions, taking special pains to have Kensan, to which he attached the greatest importance, very strongly protected with fieldworks and bomb-proof shelters. General Stoessel also fully appreciated the value of this position, not only as an observation post, but also because it was an excellent offensive position, from whence a forward movement could be carried out to the greatest advantage when the expected relieving column from the north should arrive. The Russians knew that General Grippenbergh was on his way southwards, and expected to hear the booming of his guns at the enemy's rear at any moment. General Stoessel, therefore, attempted to recapture the position, and on July 3rd he sent a whole division to try and drive the Japanese back. The top of Kensan can be seen from all sides, and he commenced the attack by pouring in a tremendous artillery fire from all his batteries, but thanks to the well-constructed Japanese bomb-proof shelters the effect was comparatively small.



GENERAL STOESEL



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During the day the Russians advanced, with machine guns in their skirmishing line, and with bands playing, to within 800—1,000 yards of the positions, but were unable to drive their attack further home. In the night they tried to take the hill by surprise. In spite of the difficult climbing amongst the loose boulders, they succeeded in creeping up quite noiselessly, and nearly reached the summit unobserved. A fierce hand-to-hand fight ensued on the wild mountain in the darkness, many falling on both sides; but the Russians, exhausted with their hard climb, were finally driven back. The attack was resumed on the morning of the 4th, and continued the whole day; but the Japanese, who could draw reserves from their entire 11th Division, proved too strong, so all the Russian bravery, which the Japanese praise highly, was of no avail. Recognizing the futility of further efforts, the Russians fell back, on the morning of July 5th, to the hills opposite Kensan, where they had already started throwing up earthworks.

Here I must be allowed a short digression. Since the siege of Sebastopol, the Russians have been credited with having the cleverest sappers in the world; but it seems that since the days of Todleben the Russians have neglected the art of fortification. They fully understand the value of field fortifications, and use them at every opportunity, but of the more modern development of this art they appear to have learnt nothing. Their fieldworks are of much the same type as was in use about the middle of last century, giving defenders no fair chance against an enemy equipped with modern long-range arms of precision. They throw up most of their trenches on the crest of the hills, where they stand out clearly against the sky,



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visible everywhere. Even where they have trenches on the slopes or at the foot of a hill, they take no pains to conceal them or to construct blinds to draw the enemy's fire. The troops have to shoot over the top of the breastworks, and so expose their heads and shoulders. This is why the Japanese, time after time, were able to drive them out of their trenches by shrapnel fire alone (e.g. at Nanshan). As the war progressed, much of this was altered and improved. Already during the two months from Nanshan to Port Arthur they had learnt much. The trenches I saw at their last advanced positions before Port Arthur were much better constructed and masked than those more forward. In Manchuria, from Liaoyang, the Russian field fortifications were, from all reports, exceedingly well constructed.

But to resume. From July 5th to 26th the two armies kept their relative positions, nothing but small engagements of outposts taking place. Towards the middle of July Talien Bay had been completely cleared of mines, so there was no longer any danger in making the conveniently situated port of Dalny the base of the Third Army. During the latter part of the month the whole of the 9th Army Division and two independent infantry brigades were landed here, as well as the 2nd independent artillery brigade and a number of siege and naval guns. The whole force of the Third Army thus being assembled, no reason existed for delaying the attack on Port Arthur.

The Russians, meanwhile, had employed the delay in constructing strong semi-permanent fortifications along their whole line of defence, which extended from coast to coast, from Shuang-taikou in the north over the An-tze-ling Pass to

Loa-tsao-shan. Their strongest position was on the high steep mountain, Ojikeisan, which rises over the An-tze-ling Pass. The rugged outlines stand boldly out against the sky, and its sides, from which a succession of craggy spurs spring forth, in many places form perfectly perpendicular walls and break-neck precipices.

The attack on the Russian lines of defence began on July 26th. The Japanese 1st Division formed the right wing and the 11th Division their left, with the 9th as the centre. It was a foggy morning, and a heavy mist hung over the tops of the hills and obstructed the view of the Russian positions. This cleared up about nine o'clock, and the Japanese guns opened fire; but they had to leave off every now and again, as showers of rain fell intermittently, blotting the enemy's trenches out of sight. The infantry advanced towards evening, and occupied the foot and the lower spurs of the hills. After dark a general night attack was made all along the line, but it was everywhere repulsed.

The 27th dawned fine, and a violent artillery duel began early in the morning, the Japanese concentrating most of their fire on the Russian positions on Ojikeisan. About noon their infantry began a forward movement, and by 3 p.m. they had forced the Russians to retire from their lower trenches. These were at once occupied by the Japanese; and now began one of the most remarkable fights in modern history. The upper parts of the hills are so steep that it is a marvel any man could climb them, but the Japanese went to work undauntedly. The very steepness of the hill-sides was in a way an advantage to them, as everywhere there were dead angles, where they could stop for awhile and recover breath. Little by

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little they succeeded in creeping up close to the upper trenches, though with very considerable losses. In some places they reduced the distance between themselves and the trenches to five or six yards, but this distance must be reckoned vertically, and not horizontally. Short as it was, this space was insurmountable without the aid of scaling ladders. The Japanese had to stand with their backs to the rocks, and fire right up in the air, and the Russians had to lean over the precipice, and fire vertically on to the heads of their assailants. In one place a Russian tried to lasso a Japanese soldier; he lowered a rope and succeeded in throwing it over his neck, but the Japanese caught hold of the noose with both hands before it was hauled taut. Now ensued a veritable tug of war between them for life or death. Seeing at last that he could not from his position get the Japanese off his feet, the Russian suddenly let go. The Japanese lost his balance and fell down the precipice, breaking his neck, so that he might as well have let the Russian had the pleasure of hanging him. In other places the Japanese succeeded in reaching the trenches, and a fierce hand-to-hand fight took place; but they were everywhere repulsed and driven back with heavy losses.

During the night, on the left wing, the 11th Division made two separate attacks, but did not succeed in charging through. Later in the night two companies were detailed to make another attempt, and this time they managed to carry their attack home. They broke through the Russian lines, and so turned the scales in favour of the Japanese, who at once followed up their advantage, and pushed a number of troops through the breach. On the morning of the

28th, the Russians, seeing the futility of further resistance, withdrew in good order to a range of positions extending from Takushan across Fenghoangshan to Nitongtze, which had already in parts been prepared for defence. The Japanese did not pursue, but had a well-earned rest on the 29th.

The Japanese losses during the two days' battle had been very considerable, there being over 4,000 casualties. They did not want to give the Russians another opportunity of strongly entrenching themselves, so General Nogi decided to attack again on the morning of July 30th. The troops, advancing shortly before daybreak, completely surprised the outposts and piquets, who fled in disorder to their main positions, leaving their rifles piled and their great-coats on the ground. Although these main positions, even without much support in the way of fieldworks, were very strong, and undoubtedly could have held out for some time against the Japanese, General Stoessel decided to withdraw within his line of permanent fortifications without further delay. Leaving his field-artillery to keep the attackers at bay, he took the whole of his force to Port Arthur on the morning of July 30th, the artillery retiring in good order about noon.

The first act of the drama had been played to an end, and General Stoessel had every reason to be content with what he had achieved. He had obtained over two months' respite for the attack on Port Arthur, and this time had been well employed in perfecting the defences and making all arrangements for resisting a fierce assault or sustaining a long siege. He had tried and harassed the Japanese troops, and inflicted very considerable losses on them, over 8,000

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being killed, wounded or sick in hospital during this first part of the campaign—exclusive of the 4,000 or more they lost at Nanshan. And, last but not least, he had given his officers and soldiers a course in practical warfare, and taught them to understand the fighting methods of the enemy, which knowledge proved of the greatest value when the final struggle began.

CHAPTER III

FIRST GLIMPSE OF PORT ARTHUR

(See Maps, Appendix II and III)

IT was on July 30th that the Russians retreated from their last advanced positions and took shelter behind their line of permanent fortifications around Port Arthur. On the same day the Japanese occupied the abandoned positions, and at last, after nearly ten weary weeks of marching and fighting and lying-in-wait, they saw before them the famous Russian stronghold, which once for a few months had been their own, won in fair fight, but lost to them again by Russian wiles. Try to imagine their feelings. There, on the other side of the valley, not more than an hour's walk away, was this Port Arthur, which had filled their thoughts and possessed their minds for months and for years, which they had been fighting their way towards for weeks and for months, and which they were now going, by a supreme effort, to wrest from the hands of the enemy and win back for their country. One can imagine the elated feelings that swelled their breasts, and the vistas of honour and glory that opened up before them, when, at last, they saw their goal so near, and apparently at their mercy.

The men who stood there gazing towards Port Arthur knew how the people at home had been waiting for and looking forward to the capture of

the place ; that to their minds the capture of Port Arthur would sum up and crown the whole glorious campaign. They had heard with proud hearts of the many victories of their brave army and navy, and when the war bulletins were published and spread all over the town by fleet-footed, loud-voiced, bell-jingling runners, telling of new battles and new victories and new acts of daring and reckless bravery, they organized lantern processions and marched round in the streets banzaing and singing. But the best part of their enthusiasm they kept for the day when the news of the fall of Port Arthur should fly over the country, and, like a wildfire, light every lamp and transparency in every town and every village. What a turn-out there would be ! Not a man, woman or child that would not take his lantern and help to swell the ranks of the millions and join in the immense roar of banzai that would go like a thunderstorm over Japan. For months preparations had been going on for the great day : the Government itself had taken the matter in hand. Everybody knew where to meet and what to do, which procession to join, what lantern or crudely painted transparency to carry, what fancy dress to wear. Large dinner and supper parties were arranged everywhere, every restaurant and tea-house would be filled, and there would be a feasting and a demonstration and a celebration by the whole of a great nation, such as the world had probably never witnessed before.

The battle of Yalu, yes, and the battle of Tehlissu, the destruction of the Russian fleet, the rumoured defeat of the whole of Kuropatkin's army, all this was grand news, and filled the hearts of the people with joy and gladness ; but so long as Port Arthur was still in the enemy's

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hands, nothing seemed complete. For to the popular mind Port Arthur had come to stand for something more than merely a strongly fortified place. It had come to stand to them as a symbol—a symbol of supremacy. The nation that held it would be the paramount power in the Far East. To become this was the real goal of the Japanese ambition, and so long as the Russian flag still flew over the fortress the goal had not been reached.

The Japanese officers and private soldiers, who now for the first time saw before and beneath them this wonderful, almost mythical, Port Arthur, knew all this. They knew that their progress had not been quite up to expectations. The people, and even the military authorities at home, had fondly hoped that Port Arthur would have been theirs ere now; they knew that the task before them, the storming of the immensely strong fortress, was not a thing to be accomplished in a day or in a week. Still, they could see the end now; they were within striking distance, and I think every man there made a vow to himself that the blow should be delivered with such force that the enemy should be overthrown; every man gladly eager to give life and blood to help to win the place back for his country.

Some five or six miles to the north of the old town of Port Arthur, at the centre of the Japanese lines, rises a high conical peak called Fenghoangshan, which gives an excellent panoramic view of the Russian lines of defence. On the top of this hill General Nogi was standing, closely scanning the forts and trenches before him. The sight was nothing new to him. He knew the place of old. He looked to the south-west, where the powerful Itzeshan Fort lifts its strong walls on the peculiarly

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shaped hill, and his thoughts wandered back to that glorious day, ten years ago, when he personally led his brigade, and at the head of his men rushed this, the strongest of the Chinese positions.

And as his eyes wandered over the Russian lines, he saw many of the forts he knew from the Chinese campaign, Antzeshan, Erhlung, the Golden Hill, the Tiger's Tail Forts, and many others; but there was also much that was new to him. His experienced eye took in at a glance the vast improvements that had been made since the fortress came into the hands of the Russians, and I think he must have seen then how enormously difficult was the task before him. I do not think that any general but a Japanese at the head of his victorious army—these troops who had taken Nanshan in a single day—would have dreamt of attempting to take Port Arthur by assault. But with the Japanese almost everything is possible. With those soldiers there certainly was a chance, however remote, and General Nogi, who knew better than anybody with what feverish anxiety and expectancy the fall of Port Arthur was looked forward to in his country by every living man, from the Emperor down to the very humblest coolie, made up his mind then and there that he would take the risk, and that the place should be carried by direct assault. He knew it would cost thousands of lives, but he was willing to pay the bill. He calculated that to cover the short distance between the hill where he was standing and the little bright blue spot, the small part of the Port Arthur harbour he could see right in front of him, would cost him 20,000 men, killed and wounded,—a pretty stiff sum, but not more, he thought, than the place was worth. For he, of course, saw further than his

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soldiers ; for him this popular expectancy was only of a secondary consideration ; he knew that his troops were urgently needed up north, where his colleagues, Generals Oku, Nodzu, and Kuroki, had their hands full with fighting Kuropatkin and his ever-increasing army. If he could take Port Arthur and so be able to release 50,000 or 60,000 men and send them up to Liaoyang, it would go a long way to secure the Japanese success on this, the really all-important part of the theatre of war.

His eyes wandered over the Russian lines. What he saw was this :—

Right under the foot-hills in front of him stretched a broad valley, through which the Trans-Manchurian railway runs down to the sea and into Port Arthur. Down here the valley is quite narrow, but as it extends north, the hills on both sides recede until, at the large village of Shuishi, it opens up and forks out to both sides, sending one branch west to Louisa Bay and another eastwards to Takushan. The whole of the valley is fairly level, but, especially in its eastern parts, the ground is undulated, and forms in many places dead ground, where camps may be built and batteries erected, masked from the view of the enemy, and where the infantry can find shelter during an advance against the forts.

Another feature of this country are the many sluits or dongas or nullahs or whatever name conveys to you the clearest idea of crevices in the soil, generally generating where the steep hill-sides end and the gentler lower slopes begin, and which, increasing in depth and width as they pass along, provide ready-made approaches for an attacking force—though the Russians had arranged to have most of them under enfilading

fire. These dongas have been formed by the torrential summer rains of centuries, and have generally perpendicular sides and attain depths up to sometimes fifty feet. Seen from afar they look like black snakes wriggling their way uphill.

On the other side of the valley, right in front of General Nogi's position, rises a tangled mass of hills and peaks and crags, intersected by narrow valleys and gorges and gullies, but with a general direction from north-west to south-east. This high land is shaped like a parallelogram, with its northern side, facing the Shuishi valley, running nearly due east and west. From the highest peak there, Wantai Hill, a series of short spurs spring forth in a northerly direction. Each of these spurs had been fortified; on some of them permanent forts had been built, others were only provided with semi-permanent defence-works. As by far the greater amount of the fighting during the siege took place about these fortifications, it will be as well to give at this juncture an enumeration of them, leaving a nearer description until later, as they, one after the other, were attacked and captured. I may mention at once that the Japanese called each of these positions, as they did with the rearward battery positions, a "fort," and as they probably will appear as such in the official Japanese reports, I shall adopt this way of designating them, although it is in reality quite incorrect. As for their names, I have, as far as possible, used the old Chinese; the Russians called the different defence-works by numbers or letters, while the Japanese names, which often are simply translations of the Chinese, are known by none but themselves. Beginning from the west, we have the following fortified spurs and hills (see Appendix III.) :—

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1. Sungshuh, a strong permanent fort.
2. Erhlung, a strong permanent fort.
3. Hackimaki-yama, semi-permanent bomb-proof trenches skirting the comparatively large plateau.
4. West Panlung, a semi-permanent redoubt-shaped work.
5. East Panlung, a semi-permanent redoubt-shaped work.
6. "P" fort, a spur fortified in the same manner as Hackimaki-yama.
7. North Kikuan, a strong permanent fort.
8. "Q" or Kuropatkin fort, a small semi-permanent work, forming a kind of bastion in the later mentioned Chinese wall.
9. Kobu fort, a small redoubt-shaped, semi-permanent work on an isolated hillock to the east of North Kikuan.
10. East Kikuan fort, on a high steep hill consisting of two battery positions, separated by a short neck; the northern battery was a permanent work, built in concrete, the southern a semi-permanent structure.

At North Kikuan the line of defence turns suddenly south-eastwards along the eastern spurs and foot-hills of Kikuan mountain. Most of these had been fortified, partly in a permanent manner; but as little or no fighting took place here, it is unnecessary to go into details. Together with the above-mentioned defence-works they formed the *enceinte* forts of the eastern section of the fortress, extending in a semi-circle round the high land to the south of Shuishi valley right down to the sea. Here the strong permanent Laolitsui fort, built to resist attacks from the sea as well as from land, formed the transition to the sea forts, of which the Golden Hill on the high cliff lifting its tall, steep sides right up from the sea and standing guard over the narrow entrance to the harbour, was the strongest and best known.

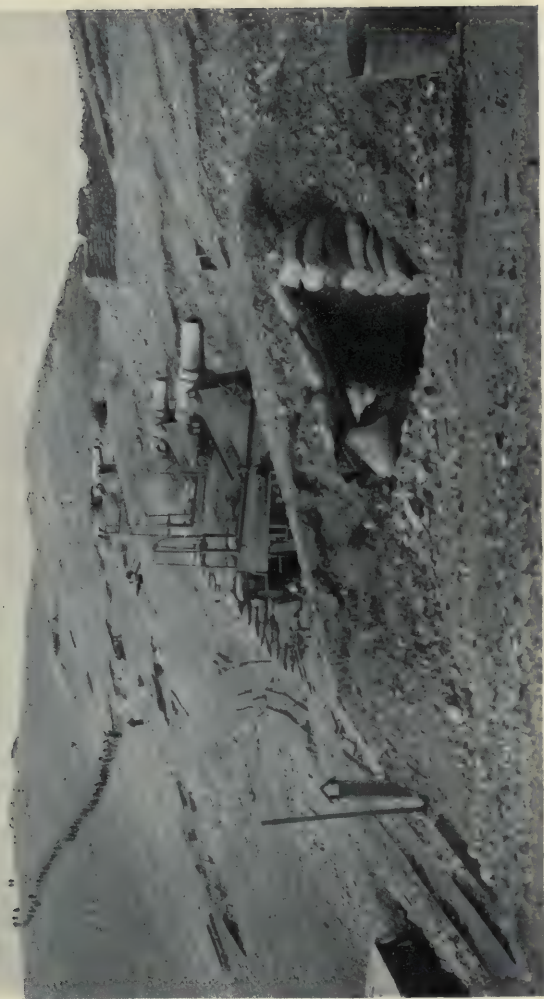
The western side of this section of fortifications

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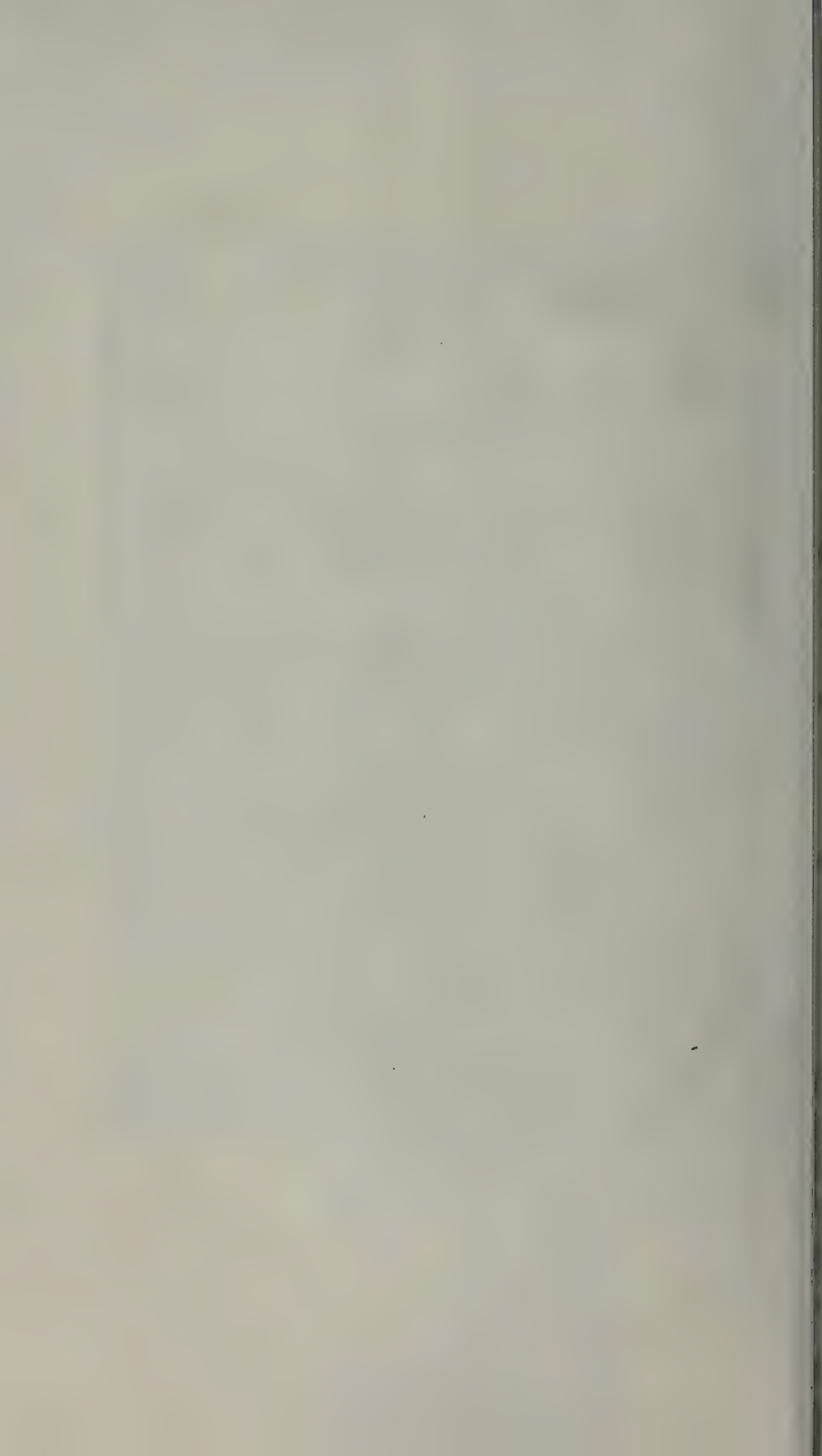
was bounded by the lower part of Shuishi valley, which, in the shape of a triangle, stretched down to the harbour, with its apex, forming an acute angle, on the water's edge, and was provided with a series of minor defence-works and strong battery positions. The strongest and best armed of these was Paijushan hill, under which the old town of Port Arthur nestled.

Although most of these works carried guns, the *enceinte* fortifications in the eastern section, with the exception of East Kikuan, were essentially infantry positions, only armed with machine guns and small cannon. The heavy ordnance was mostly placed in separate positions on the inner, higher hills, in order to draw the enemy's fire from the *enceinte* forts. The highest of these batteries was the Wantai "fort," which occupied a dominating position on the high, steep hill behind the centre of the northern front, and which, in connection with the "H" fort close by, formed a kind of citadel or *reduite* for this section of the defences. On both sides other batteries were erected. To the east, "M," "N," Haktosan, and others; to the west, "H," New Panlung, Eboshi, and the so-called Sungshuh supporting fort.

Behind the battery positions, again, circling closer round the town, there was an inner line of fortifications; but as these works were weakly constructed and had been hurriedly thrown up, besides being completely dominated by the high battery positions, they were of little value for purposes of defence. As a matter of fact, when the battery positions had been stormed and taken on January 1st, 1905, no attempt was made by the Russians to make a stand in their secondary line of defence, and it is therefore



A RUSSIAN HOWITZER BATTERY AT PORT ARTHUR



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scarcely worth while to give any further description of it.

A prominent feature in the system of defence of the eastern section was the covered way which connected all the *enceinte* forts along the whole circumference. This covered way existed already in the days of the Chinese, and therefore generally went under the name of "the Chinese Wall," and was vastly improved and extended by the Russians. From his position General Nogi could distinctly follow this covered way for nearly its whole length. It stood out as a dark line on the light green or sandy grey hill-sides, and ran, sometimes single, sometimes double, sometimes in zigzags, but most of the time in straight lines, behind the *enceinte* forts, connecting and communicating with them all. It was formed by a wall, facing the enemy, and a sunken road, which was perfectly sheltered against direct fire. Similar communications connected with the different battery positions. Behind these a fine carriage road had been constructed from the town for the conveyance of heavy guns.

The importance of the Chinese wall is evident. Not only did it act as a kind of artery through which the feeding of the forts with provisions and ammunition could be carried out under full cover, but it also permitted quickly and safely the massing of troops and conveyance of machine guns and quick-firers to any threatened point. Of what incalculable value such a sheltered communication is to a comparatively weak garrison later events have fully borne out.

As a glance at the map will show, the defences of Port Arthur fall in three distinctly different groups or sections—the eastern, which I have already mentioned; the western, bounded by the

Shuishi valley to the east and to the north, and by the low land south of Louisa Bay to the west; and lastly, the southern section, which comprises the forts on the Tiger's Tail peninsula, Loatiehshan mountain and the forts to the west of the inner harbour. Each of these groups forms a well-defined *ensemble*, and is, as a matter of fact, in itself a complete, independent and self-supporting fortress; while, if the three groups are considered *en masse*, the two former make up the *enceinte*, and the latter forms the citadel of the whole fortress, where a last stand can be made.

The ground on which the forts and batteries of the western section had been constructed is not so broken as the high land to the east of the Shuishi valley. It forms a well-defined plateau bounded on all sides by sea or low land; the inner part is fairly level and somewhat lower than the edges, which in most places form hills or mountains with very steep sides. Along the western edge of the plateau stretches a long range of hills attaining considerable heights. These hills have no proper names, but were called 174 Metre Hill, 180 Metre Hill, 203 Metre Hill, &c., according to their altitude above sea level, and I will therefore call the whole range the "Metre range." To the north of the plateau a number of high, steep, isolated hills were lying as a kind of outworks to the main position, forming a piece of broken country.

The main forts and fortifications in this section were, to the east, the two old Chinese forts, Antzeshan and Itzeshan, built on eminences rising abruptly from the lower Shuishi valley, with practically unclimbable sides. Close to Antzeshan, which was a very strong battery position, and a little further in on the plateau, was the Tai-

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Antzeshan fort. These fortifications were all permanent structures, and, though scarcely as strong as the modern forts in the eastern section, well built on positions of such a natural strength, that their capture would be a most difficult undertaking.

Along the northern side of the plateau and on the isolated hills in front were a number of semi-permanent fortifications, of which 174 Metre Hill was the most important. The Metre range was defended by the semi-permanent works on Akasakayama, 180 and 203 Metre Hills, and to the south of this range was a group of three strong, heavily armed forts, the so-called Taiyangkou forts. Besides these works there were on the plateau a number of minor defences in front of Itzeshan and Taiyangkou, and on practically every hill and eminence in the southern part of the section battery positions had been constructed.

To the west of the inner harbour, on an isolated hill, Yahutsui fort and a series of fieldworks formed the connecting link between the western and the southern sections of the fortress. On the highest top of the wild, rugged Laotiehshan mountain a battery had been constructed, and even a 10 in. gun had been dragged up there with infinite difficulties. On the lower spurs and foothills were several lighter fieldworks. The Tiger's Tail peninsula was provided with strong forts, which formed an important part in the sea defences of Port Arthur, but which also could turn their guns, with great effect, against an enemy attacking from the north.

In front of the main positions, on lower eminences in the Shuishi valley, were several strong advance-works of a semi-permanent character. To the south of Shuishi village, a system of



four lunettes connected by trenches, and, a little further to the east, the small but strong Lungyen redoubt. Further to the south, across the lower, narrow part of the valley, connecting the eastern and the western sections, were two lines of bomb-proof trenches, defended by a double row of wire entanglements, and two old Chinese camps which had been considerably strengthened and provided with guns.

I shall later have an opportunity of giving a more detailed description of the defence-works which were exposed to attacks from the Japanese, but already this bare enumeration will show that the Russians had utilized most admirably the six months' respite after the outbreak of war. Although the fortifications and still more the armament of the works at the beginning of the siege were in a very incomplete state, the natural strength of the position was such that the task confronting the Japanese was an exceedingly difficult one. The town of Port Arthur, their ultimate goal, is situated at the bottom of a basin formed by a wide stretch of hills and mountains which surround it and shelter it from all sides. On these hills the Russian defence-works had been constructed, in positions so chosen that each one supported the other; if one of them was attacked, others could join in the defence and make its capture extremely difficult; and if, in spite of all, the Japanese did succeed in taking a position, the fire from the neighbouring forts could be turned against it and make its retention impossible, or at least so fraught with heavy losses that its possession would be valueless for offensive purposes. In front of the positions was a zone of comparatively level ground which, closer up towards the defence-works, went over in steep, coverless

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inclines, over which the guns and the rifles of the defenders had full command. There were everywhere excellent observation posts to be found for the direction of the artillery fire. The reverse slopes of the hills afforded good cover for the guns and the troops. In short, from nature's hand the country round Port Arthur is a nearly ideal place for a fortress, and the Russian engineers had understood to a large extent how to turn these advantages to account.

The one great drawback was that the line of defence, as already intimated, was too close to the town and the harbour, allowing the Japanese to bring their guns into positions from where they could fire into the town from the first day of the siege. If the Russians had had time to fortify also the outer line of defence, from the peninsula to the north of Louisa Bay across the Fenghoangshan range and Takushan to the sea, and to provide it with fortifications as strong as the ones they had constructed along the inner line, Port Arthur, if properly provisioned, would have been practically impregnable. As it was, this outer line, which to a great extent dominated the Russian fortifications, came to form the Japanese offensive position. Practically concentric with the Russian line of defence, and at a most favourable distance from it, with a large tract of open country at its rear, where camps and magazines could be built, screened and sheltered from the Russian fire, this position, which would have formed a most excellent line of defence for the Russians, came to form an ideal base for the Japanese offensive operations.

Still, even with this drawback, the positions which the Russians had chosen and fortified were exceedingly strong, and the general plan of the

fortifications was excellent. Lack of time and means had, however, forced the Russian engineers to content themselves in many cases with constructions that from certain points of view were very defective. Several positions that were of vital importance to the whole defence had only been provided with semi-permanent fortifications, and, although during the siege they were constantly improved and strengthened, so that for many purposes they were as strong as permanent structures, they had not been provided with concrete casemates strong enough to give proper protection to the garrison from the fire of the enemy's heavy ordnance. Especially was this the case with the later so renowned 203 Metre Hill.

Also, in regard to the construction of many of the forts, and especially of the battery positions, a critic would find many objections. It was probably unavoidable that the forts should stand out, as they did, very clearly with their light grey or sandy red walls against the surrounding green hill-sides, but with the batteries this ought not to have been the case. The Russians had built nearly all of them on the summit of some hill, where they were silhouetted against the sky, and provided an excellent target for the Japanese gunners from their admirably masked gun emplacements. As practically all the fortifications had been improvised hurriedly at the eleventh hour, it cannot be wondered at that in no place were the guns mounted in turrets, and only in very few cases provided with shields; but that no kind of head-cover had been attempted, that no bomb-proof shelters, or barely any, were available for the squads close to the guns, and that the guns all fired over the parapet, so that their long,

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black muzzles could be seen protruding over the breastworks at a long distance with the naked eye, were very serious deficiencies which could easily have been remedied. As it was, all the Russian guns were placed for direct fire ; only for a few howitzer and mortar batteries was an exception made, and even these were placed directly behind the crest of some hill, instead of lower down, where they would be more difficult to locate without their efficiency being one whit the less.

The improvised nature of the defences was shown also in the way the gun-stands were constructed, and in the guns which had been mounted on them. Most of the guns were mounted on wooden bedplates instead of on concrete, and the guns themselves were of the most heterogeneous description—old Chinese guns, modern fortress guns (Canet), and a large number of naval guns, taken from ships in the harbour. Most of the heavier ordnance was 6 in., but there were also some 8 in. and 10 in. and even a few 11 in. guns and howitzers.

General Nogi remained on the top of Feng-hoangshan for hours, scanning the Russian positions and weighing in his mind the chances for and against his audacious plan. He saw the strength and he marked the weak points of the Russian positions, and although, of course, his survey could be but superficial, he thought there were so many good points in his favour, that, under the circumstances, he was justified in making the attempt. When he left the hill, he had made up his mind that Port Arthur should be carried by direct assault.

CHAPTER IV

PREPARATIONS

FROM conversations I had with officers of General Nogi's staff, I am convinced that the General himself was in favour of attempting to take Port Arthur by storm, and that his feelings were shared by every officer and man in his army, but it is likewise beyond doubt that he had received peremptory orders from Tokyo to do so. Foreign critics have blamed the Japanese as well as the Russians for staking so much on the capture or the retention of Port Arthur, and for tying down here large forces which might have been better employed at the main theatre of operations. I do not intend to discuss this very difficult and dubious question; it is outside the sphere of my present task. I merely point out that the Japanese undoubtedly felt sure that they could take Port Arthur within a very short time after the capture of Nanshan, and that Nogi's army then could be taken north in time to help crush Kuropatkin before his army had grown too strong. Now when we have come to fully realize the strength of the fortress and understand the hopelessness of the task at such an early stage, it seems a little absurd that an attempt in this direction should ever have been made, and we can but wonder that the generally well-informed Japanese Intelligence Department had not been

able to gauge the immensely strong resources of the place and prevent any such step being taken.

The Japanese in this case made one of the very few errors of judgment which they committed in this marvellously planned and admirably conducted campaign. At Port Arthur, as everywhere, they had every step and every move planned out beforehand, to the minutest details, even to a day, an hour, a man. When the hour came the general had only to say the word to set the entire large, complicated, but beautifully constructed machinery going, and the wheels would begin to turn, and the cogwheels to interlock, and the big rollers to start their crushing process. Only, in the case of Port Arthur, the Japanese had miscalculated the strength and hardness of the material they sought to crush. Their rollers got jammed, and the strain on some parts of the machinery became too great. A cogwheel got jammed here, an axle broke there, throwing everything out of gear, and the machine had to be stopped, repaired, and totally reconstructed, before any further progress could be made.

But assuming that the error of judgment lies principally with the Japanese Intelligence Department, and that the reports General Nogi had to hand were incorrect or incomplete, he certainly had great inducements to try to take the place by assault, apart from the strategical considerations which urged him on. He had been fighting the Russians so long now that he had a pretty clear idea of what they were worth, and what his own men could achieve against them. He admitted that they fought both gallantly and stubbornly, and had succeeded in greatly delaying his progress and inflicting heavy losses on his troops. But,

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though they had been placed in exceedingly strong positions, he had been able to dislodge them time after time, until they were now driven to a standstill with their backs to the sea,—the sea, over which there was no escape, no prospect of relief,—the sea, where the Japanese fleet reigned supreme.

The positions the Russians held now were certainly stronger than any they had occupied before, but, as far as he could judge, they were far from perfect. They had the same defects as all their former fortified positions. The forts stood out clearly against the sky or against the background, and even their guns could be seen from afar, protruding from the parapets. To Nogi, therefore, it was simply a question of cost. He had driven these same troops which he had before him here out of their fortified positions on Kensan and Ojikeisan, which looked more formidable than most of the forts in front of him. It had cost him so many thousand men ; but he could afford to lose that number and a good deal more, and he thought that if he spent five or ten times this number he would have a very good chance of a successful issue. Japan had plenty of young men to spare—had rather too many of them, as a matter of fact—but she could ill afford to spend the time and the large amount of money which a long-drawn-out siege would involve.

And at the bottom of it all I think there was still another reason which came to weigh heavily in the balance ; to wit, the whole national spirit of the Japanese soldier. From time immemorial the natural tendency, the inborn, unreflecting tactics of the Japanese fighting-man have always been to go straight for his adversary, get to close quarters with him, and have it out in a square hand-to-hand

fight. They have in this war performed frontal attacks which probably no army in the world would have attempted or deemed possible, and they have pushed an attack home time and time again where such a feat, *prima facie*, would have appeared to be utter folly or madness. They have thereby completely reversed the general ideas and the well-established rules in European armies with regard to this great fundamental question of modern warfare. Often they have had to pay for it dearly, but, having achieved their object, they have found out that the price they had to pay was no more than they could afford, often probably no more than a slower way of proceeding would have cost them, with, in addition, the time gained, the self-reliance strengthened, and the enemy's plans and calculations upset.

So General Nogi decided that Port Arthur should be taken by assault. But he was not going to do anything rash. If the attack were to fail, it should not be his fault, or for want of preparation. Everything, down to the smallest detail, was thought out, planned, and arranged beforehand, and every precaution taken and every means exhausted to ensure success.

The first question to decide was where the attempt to break through the Russian lines should be made. He had several alternatives to choose between. Through the strong walls of fort-defended hills and mountains which surround the town on all sides two gaps lead; at the centre of the positions the narrow southern part of Shuishi valley stretches down to the old town, and on the western flank a stretch of low land extends from Louisa Bay to the inner part of the harbour. During the war of 1894 the main Japanese advance had been made along the latter route

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and it is probable that this alternative first presented itself to General Nogi.

But much was changed since the days of the Chinese campaign. Through spies and reconnoitring parties he learnt that the Russians had constructed very strong fortifications on both sides of the valley, completely dominating it, and from Yahutsui and the Taiyangkou forts the whole line of advance could be swept by gun and rifle fire, while the forts on Tiger's Tail and Laotiehshan could take an effective part in the defence and make the progress of an attacking force still more difficult. Even if they succeeded in reaching the lower part of the valley, they would be faced by the necessity of capturing the formidable Taiyangkou forts which barred the way to the new town, and in defence of these, not only the above-mentioned forts could join, but the batteries of Paijushan, the Golden Hill, 203 Metre Hill and others could take part, making a successful issue problematical.

Similar objections must be put forward against the choice of the Shuishi valley route, and to a still more pronounced degree; because here, in the first place, the forts on both sides were stronger, and the lower part of the valley even more level and devoid of cover of any description; and, secondly, because an advance in this direction would necessitate the capture of a series of strong advanced defence-works, the Shuishi lunettes, the Lungyen redoubt, and the double row of wire-defended trenches across the lower end of the valley, a feat which, under the concentrated fire from Itzeshan, Antzeshan, Sungshuh, Erhlung, Paijushan, and Tiger's Tail, was next to impossible.

To attempt an attack against the western

section was out of the question ; that would require the capture of the strong Itzeshan and Antzeshan forts with a number of minor advanced positions, and thereafter an advance across the large, comparatively level plateau under the cross-fire from the many strongly fortified and heavily armed positions which surround it.

The only remaining alternative was to direct an attack against the eastern fort-ridge. In spite of the fact, which, however, scarcely was known to the Japanese, that some of the very strongest of the land forts had been constructed in this section, there were several reasons which made the choice of this route less objectionable than the others. In the first place, this was the shortest way to the town, and there were no advanced works in front of the forts, which therefore could be attacked directly ; secondly, the country where the forts had been constructed was exceedingly broken and intersected by narrow valleys and gorges and deep dongas, so that the advance to some extent would be sheltered from the enemy's fire, while in many places there was dead ground where the troops could stop and re-form and snatch a short rest. The principal object of an attacking force must be the high, steep Wantai hill, which completely dominated the whole surrounding country, and from where an advance on the town would be a comparatively easy matter ; but to achieve this it would be necessary to open a way through the *enceinte* forts of the section, capturing one or two of them through which the troops could be poured.

As I have already pointed out, the Japanese knew astonishingly little of the strength and the construction of the defences of Port Arthur ; but they had been able to ascertain that the centre of

the northern front of the fort-ridge was comparatively weakly fortified. Sungshuh and, still more, Erhlung on the western flank and the elevated East Kikuan fort on the eastern flank looked very strong and imposing, but the intermediate forts and positions looked less formidable, and from the information General Nogi had to hand he knew that the two Panlung forts, right in front of Wantai, were only semi-permanent structures, and not particularly strongly built. It was therefore natural to make the attempt of breaking through at this point.

The natural formation of the ground in front of the Panlung forts lent itself very well to this purpose. From Takushan a long low ridge runs out in a westerly direction along the centre of the Shuishi valley; to the south it soon merges into the lower gentle slopes of the Wantai spurs, but on the north side it falls abruptly, forming a dip in the country where large forces could be drawn up and where guns and mortars could be placed in perfect shelter, thus forming an excellent base for offensive operations. This low ridge extends westwards towards Lungyen redoubt; parts of the dip can be raked by fire from here; but many portions were perfectly sheltered by traverse-like projections from the ridge itself. For these reasons it was natural, once a direct assault was decided upon, to make it by way of the Panlung forts and Wantai, and this was the plan General Nogi adopted.

The General had at his disposal three complete army divisions, the 1st, the 9th, and the 11th, each consisting of four infantry regiments, six field or mountain batteries, three squadrons of cavalry, three pioneer companies, one ambulance company, and field and standing hospitals, besides

commissariat and transport detachments. As a reserve, which he kept in his own hand, he had two independent infantry brigades, each of three regiments, and one independent artillery brigade, likewise of three regiments; and, finally, he had a large siege-park of guns, howitzers, and mortars. The total force amounted to about 70,000 men. (The complete establishment of the investing army will be seen from the list, Appendix IV.)

It has been more difficult to ascertain the real strength of the garrison, and to reconcile the widely different statements from Russian and Japanese sources; but, as far as I can judge, the garrison of "the fortified district of Kuang-tung" before Nanshan consisted of nine Siberian infantry regiments (regiments No. 5, 13, 14, 15, 16, 25, 26, 27, 28), three reserve battalions and three companies (left by the three regiments which had been sent from Port Arthur to the Yalu), in all about 30,000 men. The artillery consisted of about 2,000 field artillery, twelve companies of fortress artillery, each of 330 men, and 800 naval gunners—total 6,800 men. There were 500 engineers and 100 cavalry. Besides these there were stationed in Port Arthur a detachment of 5,000 sailors and marines, who did permanent service in the forts, and, later in the siege, another force of 5,000 men was taken from the fleet to take part in the land operations. With ambulances, hospitals, commissariat, &c., the total forces of the Russians may be put at about 50,000 men.

It must, however, be remembered that the Japanese estimate fell very much short of this number; 20,000, or at the outside 25,000 men was the number upon which General Nogi based his plans of operations.

From the positions which the Japanese occupied on July 30th it was impossible to make the general assault on Port Arthur. Although the Russians had retreated behind their permanent fortifications, they still held on to advanced positions on both flanks, which were so situated that they could make an attack very difficult. To the west they occupied a series of isolated hills in front of the western plateau, from where an advance on the above-mentioned dip in the country could be taken under enfilading fire; even when the Japanese had succeeded in reaching so far, their intended base here would be dominated from these western hills. Still more harassing were the advanced positions which the Russians held on the eastern flank, on Takushan.

This mountain, the name of which in Chinese means the Big Orphan Hill, rises up to the east of Shuishi valley to a height of about 620 ft. It deserves its name, as it stands there dark and sullen and lonely, with deep shades over its rocky, precipitous sides. The position not only dominates the whole Shuishi valley, but also a large part of the flat country to the north of the Fenghoangshan range, and during the first days, when the Japanese were bringing their troops and guns forward, the Russians from Takushan inflicted heavy losses on them by their shrapnel fire. Add to this that Takushan was an excellent observation post from which the Russians could follow what was going on in and behind the Japanese lines and be able to exactly locate their batteries, and it will become evident that as long as the hill was in the possession of the Russians no real progress could be made, and the investment of the fortress would be incomplete.

The isolated western hills were captured on

August 15th, after three days of heavy fighting in pouring rain, and the Russian advanced posts on Takushan and Hsiaokushan were driven back behind their main lines of defence on August 9th, after a very stubborn resistance which kept the Japanese at bay for three days. As these events happened before I was allowed to the front, and as, properly speaking, they do not form part of the real siege of Port Arthur, I shall confine myself to stating that the troops which took part in the operations on the western flank were the whole 1st Army Division, reinforced by three field batteries from the independent artillery brigade, and, in the Takushan fights, the whole 11th Division, reinforced by three batteries of 4.7 siege guns and four batteries of 3.5 mortars. There was hard fighting in both places, the Japanese losses amounting to about 3,000 men.

While these preliminary operations were going on, General Nogi employed the time in making preparations for the general attack. Having decided his principal tactical object and his main line of advance, the next question to consider was the placing of his guns.

The lessons of the Boer War, and to some extent of the Russo-Turkish War, pointed it seemed to an evolution in modern warfare, which made the *rôle* of the artillery in the battle grow less and less important, and shifted nearly the whole burden of the fighting on to the shoulders of the infantry. The present campaign has changed all this. It is the Japanese artillery which has won them their victories, or rather the perfect collaboration of the artillery with its sister arms. Without the ability and excellent tactics of the one, all the bravery and gallantry of the other would have been of little avail. I have no exact information

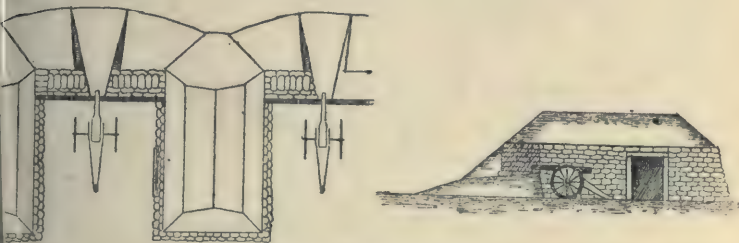
concerning the relative proportion of shell and rifle wounds amongst the Russians; but I have been told that the number of shell wounds has been unusually large. In the Japanese army, from the beginning of June to the end of October, the percentage of shell and shrapnel wounds amounted to 21·27 per cent., about double what it has been in the latest wars, proving that the artillery has been restored to its importance and made to play the *rôle* which every great general, from Gustavus Adolphus to Moltke, has assigned to it.

I shall later have an opportunity of returning to this subject. At present I shall content myself with pointing out that, from all I have seen, it is not the shooting which has been so superior on the Japanese side. I have seen as good and better practice in European armies; and the finest piece of gunnery practice I have ever seen was by a Russian battery here on September 20th. But the Japanese artillery tactics as a whole are better than the Russian, considered both independently and in connection with infantry operations.

During a siege, the guns are much more stationary than in open battle, and it is principally in his choice of positions that the gunner can show his qualities as a tactician. In this respect the Japanese have shown themselves far superior to their Russian opponents. I have already remarked on the out-of-date manner in which the Russian battery positions and gun epaulements had been constructed during the Peninsular campaign—nearly always on the crest of some hill, standing boldly out against the sky, while the Japanese batteries were so ably placed and cleverly masked that they were most difficult

to locate. If the Japanese had taken great pains in selecting their positions on previous occasions, the inducement to do so now, before Port Arthur, was infinitely stronger, in face of the much more powerful Russian guns, with the possibility of a long siege before them, and with the great prize at stake.

With the Panlung and Wantai forts for principal tactical objects, the Fenghoangshan range was the natural position to choose for the bulk of the siege park, situated as it is right opposite and at a most favourable distance from the Russian positions on the eastern fort-ridge,



JAPANESE GUN EPAULEMENT.

which is partly dominated. Practically all the Japanese siege and naval batteries were therefore brought into position here, extending along the southern ridge of the range, the naval batteries forming the right wing, the siege gun batteries the left, *à cheval* across the railway. The howitzers and mortars and most of the field and mountain batteries were placed more forward, in amongst the foot-hills and out to the west amongst the isolated hills which the Japanese had captured; several of these batteries were also placed in the before-mentioned dip in the ground at the centre of Shuishi valley. With the exception of the naval batteries, where gunners were



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not trained for such practice, most of the guns were placed for indirect fire.

All the guns which the Japanese at this period had brought against Port Arthur were mounted on wheels, and none of them was of larger calibre than 4.7 in., so the gun emplacements could be made of the ordinary type, as the above sketch shows. They consisted of a strongly built breast-work of sandbags with embrasures for the guns and with strong traverses between each. Bomb-proof shelters for the gunners were constructed behind or at the sides of the battery, where they could stay when there was no fighting going on, and there were bomb-proofs in the traverses too for the ammunition and for the squads during practice.

The bringing up of the heavy guns along the muddy roads, nearly impassable after the heavy rains, often by long detours and by night in order to keep them out of the enemy's view, was the next thing, and it was now common all over the country behind the Japanese lines, to see the big guns being hauled along by a lusty crew of a hundred soldiers or sailors, singing and laughing and shouting as they went along. Over a bit of good road, they would get the big, unwieldy things on the run, but in most places the progress was very slow, taking them many hours, sometimes, to pull the gun forwards a couple of hundred yards.

Besides the work for the artillery there were a hundred other things to be done,—camps, and distribution of the soldiers, the commissariat service, telephones and telegraphs, hospitals, the ammunition, the signal service, the construction of covers or trenches along the roads between the different positions, and so forth. Finally, there

was the planning of the assault itself in every detail, from the first shot fired to the day when the place should be taken and the flag of the Rising Sun fly over the fortress of Port Arthur.

All this took time, and it was not until August 17th that General Nogi felt satisfied that everything was ready. He rested his troops on the 18th, and on the 19th he opened his attack.

CHAPTER V

THE OPENING OF THE BALL

ON the morning of August 19th, the day selected for the opening of the general assault on Port Arthur, the correspondents attached to the Third Army were presented to General Nogi. He received us at his headquarters in Shuangtaikou in the most amiable manner, and made his interpreter introduce us individually and tell him what our nationality was, and what papers we represented. Then he said :—

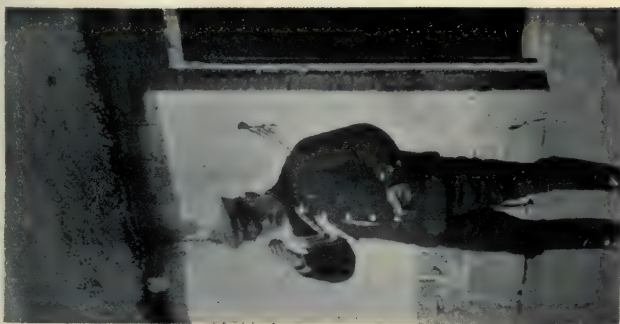
“You have come a very long way, gentlemen, to see this war, and you have had to wait very long before you have been allowed to the front ; but you have been very fortunate in arriving just at the right moment to see the conclusion of a victorious campaign”—remarkable words, which bear out my assertions in previous chapters, and which we should come to think of many a time during the following months. After enjoining us to take good care of our health, he closed the interview by saying that he regretted he would be so busy for the next few days that he would be unable to see us, but he hoped he would be able to do so again in the near future.

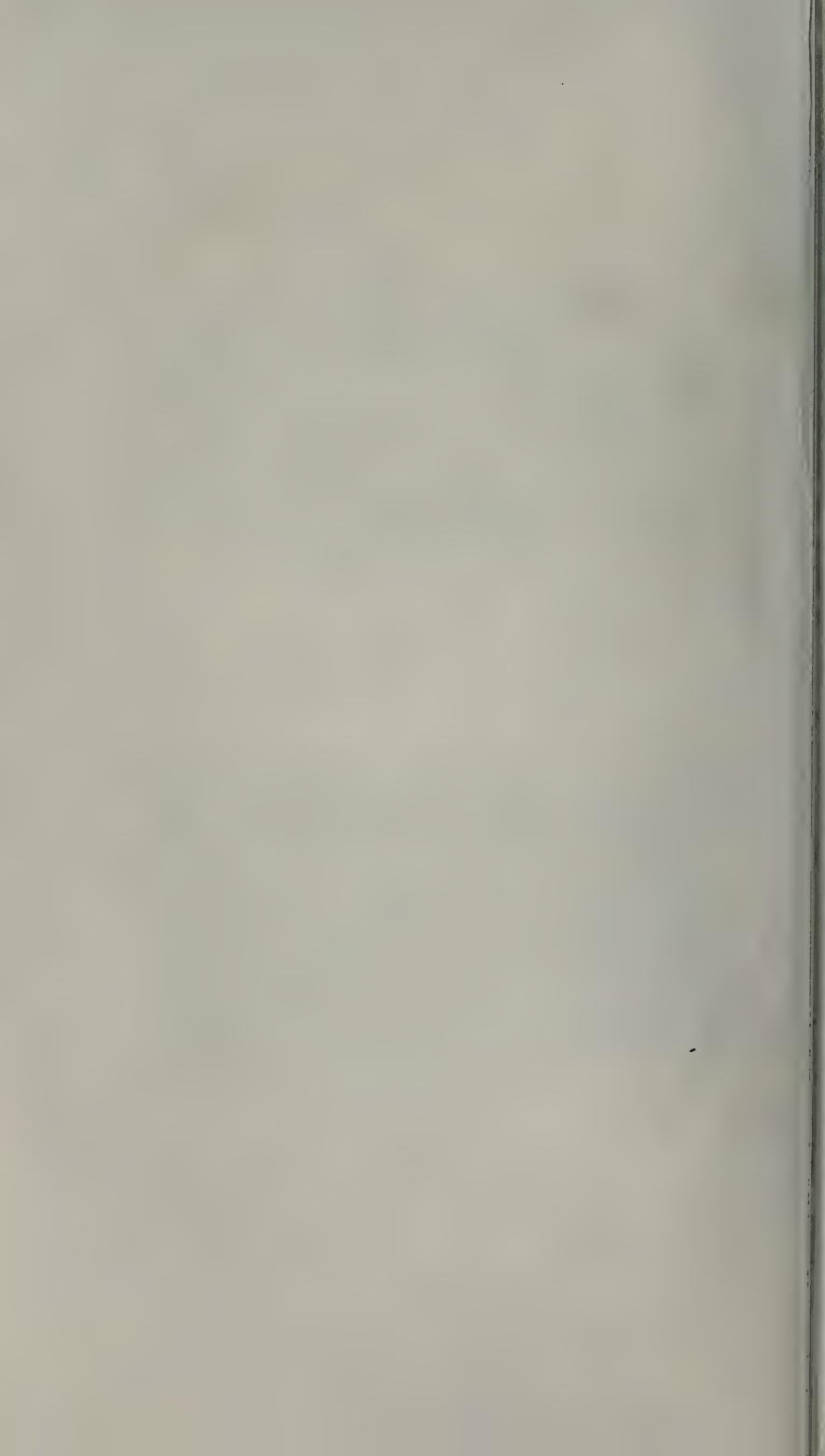
General Nogi impressed me at that first interview very favourably. He was a handsome man—as Japanese beauty goes—and though his full

A SNAPSHOT OF GENERAL NOGI



GENERAL IDITTI





beard was nearly white and his hair grizzly, he carried his fifty-six years lightly. He had fine, calm, resolute eyes. His smile was most pleasant, and revealed a set of perfect teeth. He looked a strong man, a man of great intellect, self-possession, and tenacity of purpose. When we left him, we were all ready to believe that we could take his hint of seeing him again shortly—in Port Arthur—as something more than a mere *façon de parler*. His quiet confidence in himself and his brave soldiers made us waive all our doubts and all our own theories, and believe, as all his officers and men believed, that he would really take Port Arthur by direct assault in a few days.

Later on, when we came to know him better, other sides of his character came more into evidence. General Nogi is, of all the Japanese I have met, the most perfect gentleman. Courteous, considerate, *chevalieresque*, not only in manners, but from the bottom of his heart, he was always ready to help and assist us. Even when things went worst with his army, and he himself had been struck a fearful blow by the loss of his only surviving son (killed during the attacks on 203 Metre Hill), he found time to think of our welfare and send us wine and dainty fruits from his own gardens. He liked to see and talk to us, and was very much interested in English views and opinions. The General could not speak our language, though he understood a little, and our conversations had therefore to be held through an interpreter. This naturally to a considerable degree prevented a more intimate intercourse, which I feel sure nobody regretted more than the General himself.

One bitterly cold winter day, when a strong gale was blowing, I met him as he came riding home from a tour of inspection. I saluted, and

for once in his life he addressed me in English, calling to me as he rode past,—

“To-day . . . wind . . . very!”

“Yes, General,” I answered, “wind, very!” and he rode home, as pleased as Punch.

It is a common thing for the chief of staff of an army to be given more credit for what has been achieved than the commander himself, and I confess that for some time I made the same mistake with regard to General Nogi. The chief of staff, General Iditti, was an exceedingly capable and distinguished officer, and he will undoubtedly go far. He had a more masterly way than his chief, and it is therefore perhaps only natural that among the foreign correspondents he was at first considered the soul of the whole attack. This may be so up to a certain point; but that General Nogi had a will of his own, and was anything but a puppet, I have had many proofs. His officers had the greatest admiration for his capacity, and a very wholesome fear of his disapproval.

After our interview we went on for a few miles to the high conical peak of Fenghoangshan where General Nogi had stood, gazing out over the forts of Port Arthur, on July 30th, when he had driven the Russians behind their last line of defence, and, for the first time in this campaign, saw the famous fortress before him. From this same hill, affording us an excellent panoramic view of the whole field of operations, we watched the events of this and the following days.

General Nogi's plans were based on the assumption that he could lead an overwhelming force against the Russians, every man of which could be relied on to do his duty unflinchingly.

He would engage the enemy everywhere along his whole front, forcing him to spread his strength

over a large area, and making it difficult for him to concentrate any considerable force at any threatened point. He would make vigorous demonstrations on the western flank, but he would strike his heaviest blow at the centre of the eastern section in order to make a breach here, through which he could hurl thousands upon thousands of men. The first would be mown down, but others would follow and press the attack a little further home. These would be mown down in their turn; but he had practically inexhaustible supplies to draw from, and he was resolved to use them freely. By-and-by he would gain ground, and the enemy, having little in the way of reserves to draw upon, would become exhausted, and his resistance grow weaker, until it would be crushed under a last powerful assault, undertaken with an overwhelming force against the tired-out and demoralized defenders. Once firmly established on Wantai hill, with the town right below him and at his mercy, he would have driven a solid wedge between the eastern and the western sections of the fortress, cutting them off from their base, so that they would fall into his hands like ripe apples, without his having to do much in the way of shaking.

C'est le premier pas qui coûte, and General Nogi knew that at Port Arthur the cost would be very dear. He was prepared to pay for this breach through the fortifications with as much as 10,000 or 15,000 men—more, if necessary. But he did not think it would take more than that; 20,000 killed and wounded to take Port Arthur was the number upon which he based his calculations.

But before sending his infantry against the fortifications, he would prepare their way and

make their task easier. He had at his disposal a large number of big guns—siege guns, naval guns, howitzers and mortars, besides his field artillery—and he would spend two or three days in keeping the forts under such a continuous heavy fire that their defenders would be decimated, or, what was more to the point, demoralized, and no match, even in their strong positions, for his own well-rested troops.

August 19th was a beautiful high-summer day. During the previous fortnight rain had fallen heavily, but that was evidently the last effort of the rainy season to wield its power. A light northerly breeze had swept away the last remnants of the clouds, and under a high, dark-blue sky the Kuang-tung peninsula, with its green fields and blue-shadowed hills, stretched peacefully and lazily between the two seas, which looked still bluer, still more lustrous than even the sky above.

As we came nearer to our post of observation, the firing, which had been very heavy since early morning, died down, and, as we climbed the high, steep hill, a perfect silence reigned everywhere. Some thought that the fight was over, and scrutinized through their glasses the whole fort line to find the white flag of surrender which they felt sure must be flying somewhere. They were soon to be disillusioned or, rather, relieved.

Suddenly the report of a big gun from somewhere in the centre of the Japanese lines is heard, followed by the zish of the shell as it cleaves through the air, and by the rolling echo from hills and mountains. Then, a few seconds later, we see a cloud of white smoke and reddish grey dust spring up in front of one of the Russian advanced forts where the shell had struck. This is evidently a signal. From every battery it is

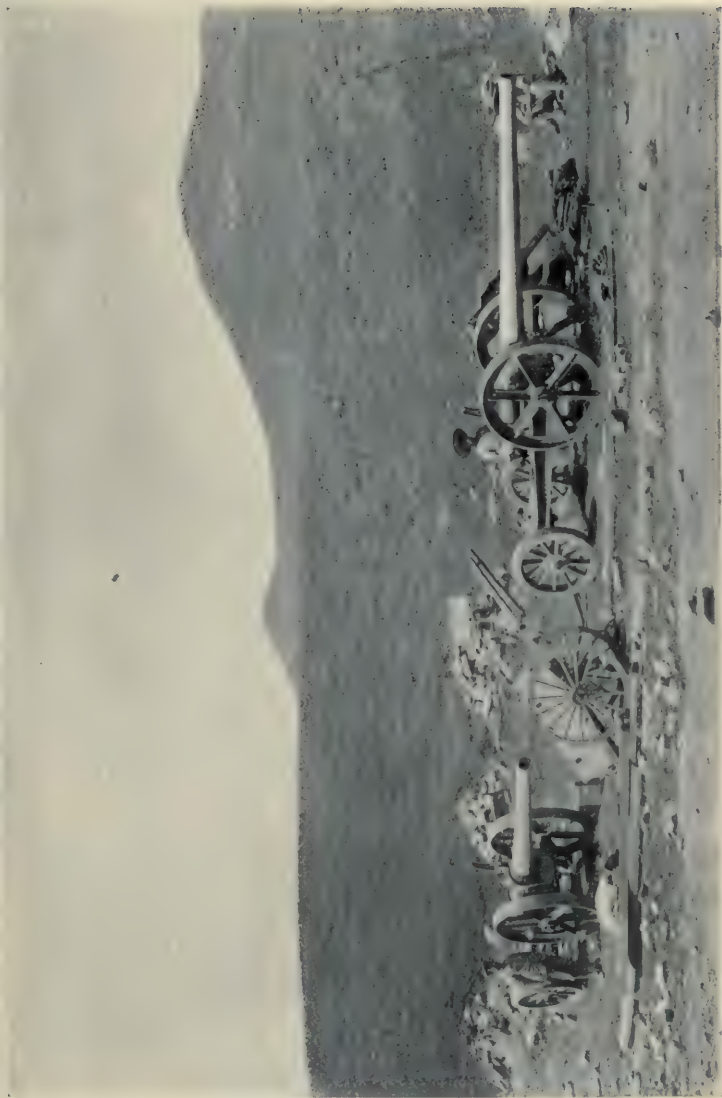
taken up. Big naval guns and siege guns roar it defiantly back; howitzers take up the call with short, loud, angry barks, while a hundred field-guns chime in and help to swell the thunder. The peace of the beautiful summer day is torn to tatters. Shells of all sizes are hurled through the air. The sound-waves from the firing guns spring forth and meet and cross each other and mix with the report of the bursting shells and their echo from the hills, and blend into a deafening, thundering *fracas*. In and around the Russian lines of defence puffs of smoke and clouds of dust leap into the air where the shells have struck, and at times they are poured in so thickly that it looks as if an immense hail-storm were passing over the forts. Unceasingly, from dawn till long after dark, the firing is kept up, without respite, without mercy. The strongest fire is concentrated on the Panlung and the North Kikuan forts right in front of us. We can literally see the walls crumbling. The straight lines and the sharp angles disappear slowly, and these forts become more and more like huge formless mud-heaps, while their glacis and the hill-sides gradually come to look like a rabbit warren.

The Russian forts seem wonderfully silent and subdued during this heavy bombardment. Only a comparatively small number of shots are fired, and these seem to be indiscriminately distributed all over the Japanese lines, without any plan or concentration. We had expected a hard-fought artillery duel, such as ought to have taken place according to all well-established rules and traditions; but in this we were disappointed. The Japanese had it all their own way. We were somewhat at a loss to explain and understand the

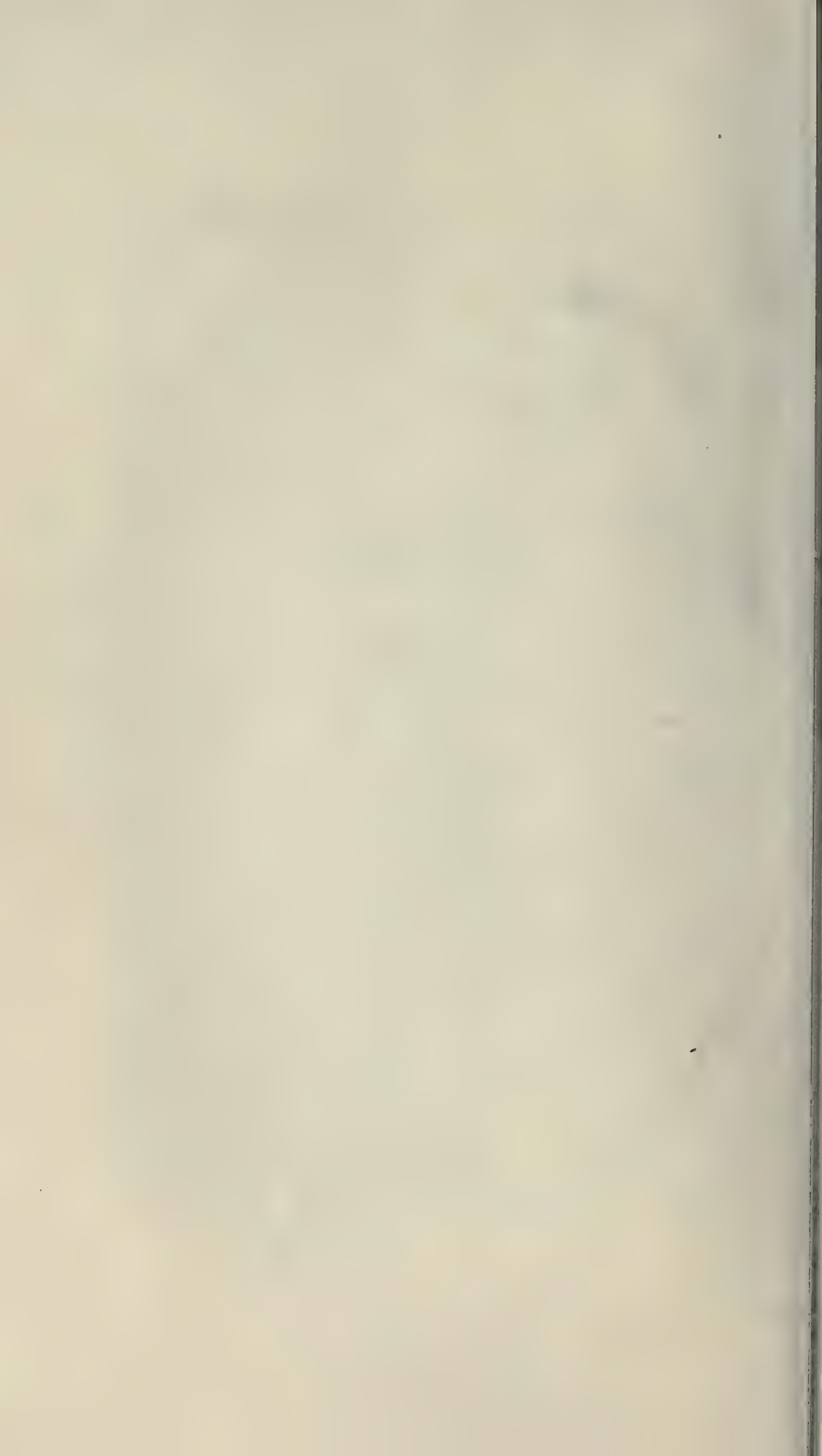
Russian silence, and so, I hasten to say, were many of the Japanese officers. What was the reason? Were all the Japanese batteries so well masked that not one of them could be located from any part of the Russian lines? Were the Russians short of ammunition? Was the Japanese fire so strong that the Russian gunners could not stand to their guns? Whatever may have been the reason, the Japanese felt much elated over the state of affairs, and their goal seemed within easier reach than even they had anticipated.

The firing slackened down considerably during the night, but at the first peep of dawn it was resumed in all its former intensity, and continued interruptedly the whole of the 20th. On this day the Russians did not answer at all; the Japanese gunners could stand as quietly and safely to their guns as if they were at target practice. Their shooting was good, but, considering the large targets, the comparatively short range, and the complete safety of the gunners, it was nothing out of the common, nothing like it became later, after weeks of steady practice.

While the artillery had thus borne the burden of the first two days' work, the infantry had not been completely idle. On the 19th, about two o'clock in the afternoon, we heard the rattling of rifles far away to the west, and through our glasses we could see the Japanese infantry advancing along the range of isolated hills—in front of the western section of the fortress. The lower northern hills of this range had already been captured on August 15th; but it was essential to the Japanese plan that, if possible, the well-fortified 174 Metre Hill should also be taken before the grand assault, because it was in



JAPANESE 4.8-INCH NAVAL GUNS



an enfilading position to the infantry's advance across the Shuishi valley. In advancing here they would also draw the attention of the Russians in this direction, and divert it from those parts of their lines where the Japanese really meant to break through.

The semi-permanently fortified 174 Metre Hill was armed with two 4-in. guns, five field guns, and four machine guns. The trenches were all bomb-proof, with roof made of planks and sleepers, covered with a thick layer of earth, and with walls built up of sandbags loopholed for rifles. A single row of wire entanglements surrounded the entrenchments.

During the whole of the 19th and 20th the position was shelled by batteries of the 1st Division, ten field batteries, and ten 4.7 in. guns which had been placed in well-masked positions in the low country near Louisa Bay.

The first infantry attack commenced, as mentioned, at 2 p.m. on the 19th, under cover of the artillery fire. The advance was slow and cautious. The Russian fire was strong, and the skirmishing lines had frequently to stop and seek cover, and they made but little headway. Supports were brought up, and with this new impulse the Japanese pushed forwards again. We could see the small khaki-clad soldiers scrambling along the hill-side, some dropping never to rise again, but the rest steadily gaining ground. The Russian fire increased in intensity every minute, and again the Japanese lines had to seek cover, until new supports should arrive to fill their dwindling ranks. Then there was a forward rush of the whole force. But the Russian infantry was pelting them with a rain of bullets; a field battery opened fire on them from the Shuishi valley, and sent shrapnel

after shrapnel in amongst them, and scores of men dropped. Still they pushed on, and reached the wire entanglements. There they came to a standstill. The wire proved too strong for their shears; it was impossible to get through, and nothing could live under the devastating fire at close range. The attack was broken, crushed, and the survivors had to beat a hasty retreat.

During the night the attack was renewed, and though the Japanese were beaten back again, their sappers succeeded in making a breach in the wire entanglements. They could not cut the wire, so they cut down the supporting poles, and brought the whole arrangement down, making an opening large enough for the attacking forces to deploy through.

In the evening General Nogi, seeing that matters did not progress satisfactorily, sent the 1st independent infantry brigade to reinforce his right wing, and this brigade remained attached to the 1st Division during the rest of the siege.

The assault was resumed on the morning of the 20th, and the fort, after a hard contested fight, was stormed and captured about noon, and, though the Russians later shelled the position furiously, the Japanese retained possession of 174 Metre Hill. The Japanese troops which took part in this action were the 15th regiment, attacking from the north, and the 1st regiment which advanced from the west.

The Japanese casualties had been very considerable, over 1,400 killed and wounded.* Knowing that the two next hills on the range were very strongly fortified, and not to be rushed without careful preparation, the 1st Division

* The Russians left 350 killed in the fort.

did not push its attack further in this direction. Their operations were meant only as a demonstration to draw the Russian forces away from the real point of attack. They had succeeded in this, though at a heavy cost, and they had captured an important position, in spite of a very harassing Russian fire.

While this fighting was taking place on the Russian extreme left, other demonstrations were made towards their centre. The 3rd regiment of the 1st Division attacked the Russian outposts in Shuishi village, and drove them out after some hard close-range fighting. They pursued them across the plain towards a strong lunette some 500 yards to the south of the village, made an attack on the entrenchment, and succeeded for a short while in getting a foothold there; but the three machine guns which formed part of the armament had retired in good time and taken up a position behind the open gorge of the work, and showered such a rain of bullets on the assailants massed in the narrow unprotected inner room of the lunette, that they soon were compelled to clear out with a loss of over 300 men. This terminated for the time the operations in this direction.

Simultaneously with these demonstrations the right wing of the 9th Division attacked the Lungyen redoubt in the Shuishi valley, generally known to the correspondents as the Red Redoubt on account of the colour of the soil where it stood. This redoubt, which is situated to the north of the railway in front of and at a considerable distance from the Erhlung fort, is a small but very strong work, and its position was such, that a very harassing fire could be directed from it against the Japanese advance lines, especially against the

positions of the 11th Division near Takushan. The attempts to capture the Red Redoubt were therefore carried out in a more determined manner than the attacks on the Shuishi lunettes, and were not, like these, essentially a demonstration. As later on there was a good deal of fighting about this place, I shall defer a more detailed description of the fortification until another chapter, and for the present content myself with the statement that during August 19th and 20th, the 36th regiment made several very determined attacks on the redoubt without success. The last of these assaults reached right up to the moat in front of the rampart, but as the moat was deep, with nearly perpendicular sides, and the slopes of the breastwork were also very steep (height of parapet over bottom of moat about 15 ft.), the Japanese, who had not brought scaling ladders, were unable to cross, and had to retire with considerable losses.

Nevertheless, the first two days' operations during the general assault must, on the whole, be considered successful. The Japanese had forced the fort artillery to maintain practically complete silence. Their own artillery had to a great extent battered and destroyed the ramparts and the inner defences of the forts, where their main assault was to take place, and they had every reason to believe that their real object with this preliminary bombardment had been achieved, namely, to discourage and demoralize the garrison of the forts and prepare the way for the infantry attack. Their demonstrations had been carried out as pre-arranged, and although they had failed in taking the Shuishi lunettes and the Red Redoubt, their principal object had been achieved and the Russians led to believe that the main attack would

be directed against their left wing, as it was during the Chinese War in 1894.

On the other hand, I think that the Japanese made a mistake in not following up the first two days' operations with new demonstrations and continued attacks in this direction, whilst their main assault was taking place. On August 21st, 22nd and 23rd, there were, with a single unimportant exception, no demonstrations at all carried out on the western part of the theatre of operations. Everything was quiet here, so that it soon became evident to the Russians that the fighting here had been nothing but a feint to divert their attention from the real point of attack. This made it possible for them to concentrate, at the crucial moment, a sufficient force to stop the Japanese onslaught and turn the tide of the battle in their favour.

CHAPTER VI

CANCAN *

WHEN I arrived on the top of our hill the following morning (August 21st), the artillery still had the leading word. The thundering of the guns continued as furiously as ever; only this morning, instead of ordinary shells, the Japanese were firing shrapnel. I knew at once what that meant. The first, the introductory act of the drama had been played to an end, and the curtain had risen for the next act, in which would develop the powerful plot with its striking effects. The burden of the main rôle had been shifted on to the shoulders of the infantry, though the artillery were still well to the fore.

The object of the previous days' shelling had been to demolish as far as possible the breast-works and to smash up everything within the forts and make them like a living hell for the troops who had to stay there. The garrison would be compelled to keep to the bomb-proofs, and the incessant bursting of the shells amongst them, the enervating noise, the ravages, the killing, the horrible wounds which the shell-splinters inflict, and the impossibility of lifting a hand to retaliate on their invisible, merciless foe, would discourage and demoralize them, and unfit them to withstand a determined assault. This work had been done,

* *Anglicè*, "a lively dance."

and it was for the infantry now to reap the fruits of the artillery's labours.

But the work of the artillery fire was not yet finished. It had to cover the advance of the infantry until they were close under the ramparts of the fort, and to keep the defenders under such a continuous fire that they would be prevented from raising a rifle or levelling a gun against the attacking force. For this purpose shrapnel is more suitable than ordinary shell, bursting as it does in the air above and in front of the enemy, and raining such a hailstorm of lead and steel that he has to keep completely under cover.

We knew then that the infantry was about to advance. Scanning the whole field of operations in front of us through glasses, we could for long see no signs of moving troops, though it was evident where we should have to look and where the main attack was going to take place. All over the eastern section of the defences, from Sungshuh to East Kikuan, shrapnel was bursting, sending out little round woolly clouds of smoke, which were swiftly carried away by the light breeze. So violent was the bombardment that there was not a moment the whole day long when at least one of these small white clouds was not visible above every fort in the whole section. But where one shell was fired at another fort, at least three or four were hurled against the North Kikuan fort and the two Panlung forts nearly in front of us. At times the smoke from the bursting shrapnel leapt forth as regularly as the puffs of steam from the exhaust pipe of an engine. There could not, literally, be an inch of ground inside of these forts which had not been hit by a shrapnel bullet. It was evident, therefore, that here was the point where the Japanese meant to strike in earnest.

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The two Panlung forts are situated on two separate hills, and they are the most advanced forts to the east of the railway. They were really nothing but strong infantry earthworks, armed with but a few field guns, and of a more semi-permanent character than the other forts. They had not, like Erhlung for instance, trenches or advanced works in front. There was nothing but some thin steel wires to break the surging swell of an attack, that could strike with all its force directly against the walls of the forts. On the other hand, their possession by the Japanese would give a strong foothold right in the Russian front line, and form an *appui* from which further attacks could be carried on.

North Kikuan fort is situated a few hundred yards to the south-east of the East Panlung fort, separated from it by a small entrenched hill, called by the Japanese "P" fort, though it is really only an ordinary hill defended by ordinary field trenches. North Kikuan is a permanent fort, and, though not very large, exceedingly strong and well defended, and is surrounded by a wide and deep moat. As later on some of the fiercest fighting during the whole siege took place here, I shall defer a closer description till then.

General Nogi's plan was, as already stated, to pierce the Russian lines at the Panlung forts, the weakest point in the enemy's front line, and simultaneously to make a determined attack on North Kikuan fort. Even if the attack here should fail, it would draw the attention of the Russians in this direction, and make the task easier for the troops that were assaulting the Panlung forts. The attack on the latter he left to the 9th Division, while to the 11th Division was entrusted the capturing of North Kikuan.

When this was accomplished, the two divisions were to make a combined assault on Wantai fort on the top of the high double-peaked hill, which formed the principal object of the Japanese attack.

Through the lower slopes of the East Panlung hill a large donga leads zigzag half way up to the fort. From the Japanese lines the advance to the entrance of the donga was easy, and could be made, save for the last hundred yards or so, under complete shelter of the before-mentioned low ridge in the centre of Shuishi valley. The donga itself was partly under Russian fire, but shelter could be found everywhere behind the windings of its steep sides, so that quite a considerable force might be drawn up here and kept ready for the final rush. But from the exit of the donga up to the glacis, defended by a double row of wire entanglements, and across this to the walls of the fort, the troops would be exposed to a terrible fire not only from East Panlung but also from the neighbouring forts, especially from North Kikuan and West Panlung. To cover this distance would be practically an impossible feat, unless the defenders could be so kept in check by shrapnel fire that they would be unable to fire a shot or man a gun without courting immediate death. Hence the reason why the guns sent their rain of bullets and splinters over the forts so incessantly and so mercilessly.

The commander of the 9th Division detailed his left brigade (the 6th) under Major-General Ichinobe to make the attack against East Panlung, and he again ordered the 7th regiment to make the first assault. The gallant commander of the famous 7th, Colonel Ouchi, decided to place two of his battalions in the first line, the

right with orders to attack East Panlung, while the left marched against "P" hill and made a strong demonstration against this position in order to prevent it from taking part in the defence of the principal point of attack; the 3rd battalion was to follow and support the right battalion.

In the course of the night a detachment of sappers had succeeded in cutting several openings in the double row of wire entanglements in front of East Panlung, though with very considerable losses, the whole force being practically annihilated under the withering fire from the enemy's rifles and machine guns. Shortly before five, in the deep gloom preceding dawn, the first assault was made. From the exit of the donga the 1st battalion streamed forth; but up the coverless hill-sides, and especially when they tried to advance through the narrow openings in the wire entanglement, they were exposed to a terrible fire from the ramparts of the forts, and from both sides the fire from Erhlung, West Panlung, and North Kikuan swept in over them, literally shattering the battalion, of which only a small number of men reached as far as the foot of the glacis, where they found a scanty cover in some abandoned trenches. Colonel Ouchi then placed himself at the head of the 3rd battalion, and led it, with regimental colours flying, against the fort. The troops charged with the greatest gallantry and an absolute contempt of death; but against the furious concentrated fire nothing could stand. The colonel himself was killed with many of his officers, and few escaped scatheless from the terrible carnage; not a man had gained beyond the wire entanglements.

The battalion which operated against "P" fort had in the meantime advanced close to the hill,

but was unable to carry the position. The soldiers threw up trenches, and they kept up a lively fusilade with the defenders, making it impossible for them to take part against the assaults on East Panlung.

Major-General Ichinobe had been watching the fighting from a hill to the north of Wuchiafang village. No report had reached him from the attacking force, and although the sound of the battle and the absence of the customary exultant cries of Banzai may have given him an indication of the state of affairs, the scene which revealed itself when the day broke was more horrible than his worst forebodings had anticipated. The hillside was thickly strewn with dead and dying, and in front and around the gaps in the wire entanglements the dead bodies were piled three or four high. No progress had been made anywhere, and the small surviving force of the gallant 7th was cut off from retreat by the murderous fire of the enemy.

There was only one thing to do under the circumstances, continue the attack. General Ichinobe ordered the 35th regiment to resume the offensive under cover of a battery of machine guns, which had been brought into position close to the General's observation post. About 10 a.m. the 1st battalion set out on its perilous errand. The attack was preceded by shrapnel fire, if possible more violent than ever, over East Panlung and the neighbouring positions, and the rattling of the Japanese machine guns never ceased for a moment during the advance; but shrapnel and machine guns were of little avail against the defenders in their bomb-proof trenches, and contributed but little to make their fire less deadly. In broad daylight the advance proved

more difficult than in the dim shadowland of earliest morning, and neither the battalion first sent forward nor the one sent in support were able to make any headway. So soon as they emerged from the donga a furious fire was poured into them, and after sustaining tremendous losses they had to scurry back to shelter again. General Ichinobe, deeming it hopeless for the time being to proceed with the attacks, proposed to the divisional commander to postpone the operations until after dark, but General Oshima, after personally reviewing the situation, ordered the attacks to be continued, promising that a battalion from the right wing brigade and a strong detachment of the 4th independent brigade should immediately reinforce General Ichinobe's troops.

On receiving these orders, General Ichinobe at once despatched the whole 35th regiment to renew the assault; the battalion from the right wing brigade, which just then arrived, was ordered to form the left wing of the attackers' force. Again company after company was sent forward against the position; into 'the bullet-swept zone the men plunged unhesitatingly, running at the top of their speed; but they met the same fate as their comrades; scores upon scores of shells were hurled against them, each flinging a hail of bullets into their ranks, and innumerable bullets from rifle and machine gun swept the fields, mowing down the men by hundreds. Only a few got as far as the wire entanglements, but under the murderous cross-fire nothing could live there. The assault was again broken and shattered, the survivors seeking refuge in the friendly donga, some few finding a precarious shelter behind boulders or in a slight declivity in the ground, but most lying dead or severely wounded on the blood-soaked fields.

The only hope of General Ichinobe was now night. It took some time to get his scattered troops rallied for a fresh attack, and it was past midnight before everything was ready and he could send his columns forward again. But even the darkness, upon which he had counted for concealing his movements and making the fire of the enemy less accurate, proved of no assistance. The Russian searchlights and star-shells lighted up the fields over which his troops had to advance, enabling the defenders to aim and fire as in broad daylight, and, at the same time, blinding and confusing the attacking forces, making their task more difficult and doubly uncanny. This, the fourth attack, was also repulsed, adding greatly to the already long list of casualties. At four o'clock in the morning the divisional commander ordered a suspension of the operations, allowing a few hours' rest and sleep to the dead-tired troops.

While the 9th Division thus were making the most strenuous efforts to carry out their part of the programme, the 11th Division commenced operations against North Kikuan fort. During the heavy bombardment of the previous afternoon an ammunition magazine was set on fire, burning fiercely, and, the flames reaching the gun cartridges, a succession of small explosions took place, lasting far into the night. This might have been an excellent opportunity, if the place was to be taken by assault; but as no infantry movement had been planned for the 20th, and the troops were not prepared for action, the precious moments were allowed to pass. The Japanese thought that their chances were still good when they set out for the attack in the grey half-light of the following morning, and that the fire and the

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explosions and their fierce shelling had demoralized the garrison and made their task easy. They were soon shown their mistake. Sappers, creeping up during the night, had succeeded in cutting a way through the wire entanglements; but when the 44th regiment, leading the advance, tried to reach this point, it was met by such a devastating fire from rifles and machine guns, shells and shrapnel, that it sustained enormous losses. But the Japanese soldiers are wonderful; though their comrades fell left and right, and every step forward brought them nearer to certain death, the rapidly dwindling ranks pushed on undaunted. Some even reached as far as the moat which, deep and wide, surrounds the fort; without hesitation they jumped in, 20 ft. down; they did not know then that strong caponiers defended the moat and could rake it with fire. Their fate was sealed. The majority of the regiment did not get anywhere near the fort, the fire was too deadly; and, completely broken, the scattered remnants fled back to cover. No other attempt was made that day to attack the fort; it was too evidently hopeless, with the moat barring the way.

In the morning of August 22nd General Nogi called a council of war to discuss the situation. So far the general assault had been a complete failure. His troops had been beaten back with terrible losses everywhere. They had not succeeded in getting a foothold at any point. Not a single advantage had been gained; the question must naturally have presented itself to him whether it would not be a wiser policy to give up at once the idea of carrying Port Arthur by direct assault than to sacrifice more lives in a task the immense difficulty of which he now began fully

to realize. I do not know, of course, what the feeling was amongst his commanding officers, and what decision they might have come to; but, during the sitting, news was telephoned that part of East Panlung Fort had been taken, that his troops were in the fort, engaged in a hand-to-hand fight with the defenders and gaining ground steadily. This was not a moment for stopping operations. The meeting was instantly closed, and the divisional commanders sent back to their headquarters with orders to push the attack vigorously. A battalion of the 1st Division was detached to support the 9th Division, where the heaviest part of the fighting was taking place.

What had happened was this. When the 7th regiment made the first assault in the morning of the 21st, during which it reached further up towards the fort than any of the subsequent attacks, a force of some fifty men had found shelter in the abandoned trenches at the foot of the glacis; about twenty sappers and a few men of the 35th regiment had also sought refuge here. Besides these the trench was full of corpses and badly wounded men after the fight. It was rather deep, with a banquettes for the riflemen. After the previous heavy rain it was half full of water, and as the banquettes was taken up with the wounded, the others had to remain standing knee-deep in water and mud; they had brought some food with them, but not much, so that the pangs of hunger added to their other sufferings. They searched the pockets of the dead, and drank the blood-mixed ditch water. To retreat was out of the question under the never-ceasing fire of the enemy, so they had to spend the whole day and the whole night in this ghastly place. They saw one battalion after the other advance and break

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down under the murderous fire long before reaching their place of refuge, and they gave up all hope of relief.

On the morning of the 22nd their situation was desperate. Even the attacks had been given up; they had been left to their fate. The officers, however, reviewed the situation calmly, and, after some deliberations, decided that it would be better to die as brave soldiers in a fair fight than to perish here like rats in a hole. They decided to wait their opportunity when the vigilance of the Russians had relaxed somewhat, and then make a bold attempt of taking the fort by surprise; the distance which separated them from the walls of the fort was not great. The engineers had brought several charges of dynamite, encased in ordinary tins—the first embryo of the later so-much-used hand grenades.

Shortly after midday the rush was made. The Russians, ignorant of the force in the trench, not expecting any attack so near, were less ready with their fire than on the previous occasions. The sappers, who were in front, succeeded in reaching the walls and climbing to the parapets with comparatively small loss. They threw their grenades into the bomb-proofs, partly destroying them, and blowing a machine gun to pieces. The men of the 7th followed close, running up the hillside as fast as possible; but the Russians soon rallied; bullets and shrapnel swept down on the bold attackers. The men stopped, hesitated, wavered, and fled.

At that moment a young officer, by an heroic act, saved the day. When the others turned and fled, he did not follow. Accompanied by a couple of men, he climbed the breastwork and planted a small Japanese flag on the parapet. We could

see him call his men, pointing to the flag. They must have heard the appeal, for we saw them stop and turn again. For the second time they ran up the hill under a scathing fire. This time nothing could stop them; many fell, but the others pushed on, cleared the glacis at a run, swarmed over the breastwork up to the parapet where their flag, floating over the corpse of their brave officer, urged them on, and drove back the garrison to the inner defences of the fort. Hearing the explosion, and seeing the feat of their comrades of the 7th, other troops hurried forward to their assistance. Though the carnage amongst them during the advance was terrible, many succeeded in reaching the fort; for a short time we could see them silhouetted on the parapet; then they disappeared into the interior of the fort.

But the Russians did not intend to give in so easily. They met the attack as gallantly as it had been made. For six long hours both sides were engaged in the fiercest struggle at close quarters, with rifles and bayonets, hand grenades and machine guns, stones and fists and clubbed rifles—in amongst the bomb-proofs and the trenches, sheltered by sand-bags or out in the open, now playing at hide-and-seek, now engaged in the most furious hand-to-hand fight. Sometimes the Japanese gained ground and occupied the major portion of the fort; sometimes the Russians got the upper hand and drove them to the wall.

During the fight the Japanese suffered greatly from the artillery fire from West Panlung fort, only a few hundred yards away. At half-past four in the afternoon a Japanese shell set fire to some woodwork in this fort, and soon the whole place seemed to be in flames. Taking advantage of

this, two companies, on their way to reinforce the troops in East Panlung, took upon themselves, without orders, to make a rush at the burning fort, and they succeeded, during the confusion, in gaining a firm foothold there. After some very heavy hand-to-hand fighting amongst the burning ruins and exploding ammunition they drove the Russians out. This turned the tide of the battle also in East Panlung. Deprived of the support of the artillery fire from here, and dead tired after the long, bitter fighting, the Russians—what was left of them—retreated behind the Chinese wall, and by about six o'clock in the afternoon the forts were in the hands of the Japanese.

There were no more attacks that day on the North Kikuan fort. The 44th regiment had suffered so severely on the foregoing day that it did not attempt to repeat the experiment, but awaited the result of the fighting around the Panlung forts. When these had been taken, it would try to attack North Kikuan from the rear and then join hands with the 9th Division in their operations against Wantai. The 12th regiment, however, made a determined assault on the East Kikuan fort, but was driven back with considerable losses. This finished the operations on August 22nd.

So soon as the Russians had been driven out of the Panlung forts, their batteries opened a heavy fire on them, making them untenable but for a small force which found shelter in the bomb-proofs, and at once set to work to entrench themselves against Russian counter-attacks. The Japanese succeeded also in getting up a battery of mountain guns in East Panlung in the evening. In the course of the night the Russians made several attempts to recapture the forts, but the

attacks were not carried out with sufficient force nor with any great determination, and they all failed. The Japanese gunners suffered very severely during these sorties, but their fire proved of the greatest assistance in beating off the attacks.

August 23rd was an astonishingly quiet day. The artillery fire slackened down very considerably, and of infantry fire there was very little to be heard. The 9th Division drove the Russians out from the Chinese wall behind the Panlung forts, and sent a battalion across to the foot of Wantai hill, where it entrenched itself in some dead ground. That was all. We could not understand it. To us it seemed that just now, when important positions had been carried and held and a breach made in the Russians' lines, it was the very time to strain every nerve and hurl every man available through the breach against the Russians, now discouraged and demoralized by their reverses. To us it seemed to be the only chance to bring about the fall of the fortress by direct assault. But no; nothing, practically nothing, was done. The day was far quieter than any we had experienced since our arrival at the front.

We could not understand it; only late in the day did we learn that the front had run short of ammunition; fighting had been harder than expected, and it proved to be very difficult to bring up supplies to the fighting lines across the bullet-swept plains. Thus the Japanese troops got a well-earned rest which they had not counted on, but the rest was very dearly bought. As matters stood at this point, I think it cost them Port Arthur.

CHAPTER VII

KEHRAUS *

BY August 23rd, full supplies of ammunition had been brought forward to the fighting lines, and all preparations had been made for vigorously pushing the attack. Emergency rations had been distributed amongst the troops—there would not be time for cooking during the next couple of days—and at dusk the troops who were to take part in the attack had been concentrated at their different rendezvous. The attack had been fixed for four in the morning, shortly before daybreak, when it would be just light enough to allow them to see their way and their own men, but when the dim, dusky *demi-jour* would be quite insufficient to give the enemy any indication of the movements of their troops, and yet still light enough to break the power of the searchlights, which the Japanese had already begun to regard with a certain distrust and respect. Just at this time, neither day nor night, neither light nor dark, had always been the favourite hour for the Japanese attacks, and they saw no reason to change their methods on this occasion.

The plan for the operations remained unchanged. The 9th Division, reinforced by the 4th independent infantry brigade and one battalion from the 1st Division, were to make the main

* *Anglicè*, "finale" (the last dance).

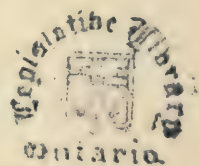
attack, advancing through the captured Panlung forts, against Wantai fort. The right brigade of the 11th Division also were to march through the Panlung forts and try to capture North Kikuan fort from the rear, where it was hoped no moat would bar their way. They should then join hands with the 9th Division, supporting the operations against Wantai by an assault from the east side, while the left brigade should operate against the forts more to the south-east. The 1st Division was simultaneously to make vigorous demonstrations to the west, against the advanced infantry trenches at the foot of Itzeshan and against the Shuishi lunettes.

In the evening everything was ready, and the troops in fighting order rested in their positions, snatching a few hours' sleep, before starting the hard work ahead of them.

For the Russians the situation was as follows:— They had been able to withstand the first impetuous shock of the attack. The mighty breakers of the surging sea had been crushed against the walls of their forts; but the sea had made a breach in their lines at their weakest point, and though they had other, inner walls to help to resist the force of the tempest, this breach in their front line was a most serious matter, and its immediate repair was an urgent necessity. General Stoessel knew enough of the Japanese not to be deceived by the temporary lull in the storm. He knew that soon it would surge again with increased fury—he could name the hour, so well did he know his antagonists—and he meant to take advantage of the short respite, to repair the damage as far as possible.

Other considerations of the greatest weight presented themselves to him and urged him on.

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His troops had hitherto acted nearly exclusively on the defensive. Their counter attacks in the night of the 22nd had been only on a small scale, and the half-hearted way in which they had been carried out, showed him plainly that the morale of his men had suffered under the heavy bombardment and the determined assaults of the enemy. He saw that to restore confidence to them and brace their courage, it would be necessary to adopt a resolute offensive. Feeling convinced of the Japanese intentions and what their next move would be, he hoped, at the same time, to forestall events and upset their plans.

He fixed his counter attack for eleven o'clock in the evening. He would despatch a small force to make a demonstration against the Japanese positions in front of the Lungyen redoubt, but he would direct his main attack against the captured Panlung forts. Concentrating a strong force in the valleys behind Wantai hill, he would at the right moment send them in two columns through the gullies on either side of the Panlung forts. The battalion, which was entrenched at the foot of Wantai, should be crushed under an impetuous attack by overwhelming forces from two sides. When his troops had worked past the Panlung forts, the left column were to engage and drive back the Japanese troops here, while the right column worked round to the back of the Japanese in the captured forts, cut off their retreat, and carried the forts by assault. He knew the garrison could not be large; the heavy artillery fire prevented that.

The night was calm and quiet; the moon, nearly full, shed its pale, dreamy light over hill and valley, and the stars twinkled brightly in the dark-blue sky. Far over to the east a powerful

searchlight was shining steadily, slowly passing its rays over the eastern portion of the valley and in amongst the foot-hills. To the south, from the Golden Hill, and to the south-west, from Ize-shan, two more searchlights explored the central and western parts of the Japanese lines, the light from Golden Hill at times sending its rays right up to our hill, blinding us, if we looked at it, like sunshine, and making every stone, every straw, every feature of our faces, stand out as clearly as in broad daylight—at a distance of over six miles. At times we could hear a faint zish in the air, when a star-shell was fired. A thin, scarcely perceptible curved line of sparks mounting skywards, a rain of white phosphorous stars sinking slowly, slowly through the dark night, a glory of light, a dream of beauty—and a means of illuminating, for a few moments, the underlying country, far superior to the rays of a half-score searchlights. The light, of great intensity, coming from direct overhead, throws no deep shadows and lays bare every man and object within the huge circle of light. These star-shells were of the kind familiar at firework displays at home, only much bigger than any I had ever seen before, their illuminative power being marvellous. Were it not for the occasional booming of a gun and the sudden red flash of a bursting shell, we might have imagined that we were sitting on a high terrace looking at some *festa* at a distance.

It was about eleven o'clock in the evening. We sat quietly smoking and chatting, and admiring the effects of the lights and the fireworks, and were, for the time being, more occupied with our own little private war with the mosquitoes than with watching the moves in the bigger game of war in front of us. Suddenly we heard musketry

fire away to the right. Now, when we heard rifles going, we were always on the *qui vive*. The guns might roar like thunder without our paying much attention, but when the rattle of rifle-fire began to join in the chorus, we knew that some move was contemplated, and we became all ears and attention. We forgot all about the excellent argument we were going to bring against the other man when he stopped talking; we even forgot our feud with the mosquitoes, and we strained our ears.

But our attention was soon drawn in another direction. Right to the south of us, apparently behind the Panlung forts, other infantry began to open fire. The sound increased rapidly in force and in vehemence, machine guns began to beat their devil's tattoo, and the rat-a-tat of the pom-poms joined in the hub-bub, making it pretty clear that this was to be a serious thing. And there were other indications. New searchlights began to flash from the Russians' lines—increasing to the number of seven in the course of the night—and star-shells were sent up in rapid succession all over the field of operations.

We did not know as yet whether this was a Japanese assault or a Russian sortie; but we were not long kept in ignorance. We could not see anything of the moving troops, of course, but the searchlights and the star-shells showed us where the fighting was taking place, and the din of the battle, which increased not only in volume but also in force and loudness, told us that the fighting was drawing nearer and nearer in our direction,—it was a Russian counter attack; General Stoessel was carrying out his plans.

Moving noiselessly along the roads by which they could approach unseen quite near to where

the battalion of the 7th regiment was entrenched under the Wantai hill, the Russians converged upon it and opened a terrible fire from two sides with rifles and machine guns, mowing down hundreds. Part of their force worked round and attacked from the rear, and the main body of the Russians came sweeping down in front and on both flanks and drove the Japanese troops out of their trenches, back across the Chinese wall and into or past the captured Panlung forts,—though not many reached so far; the carnage had been terrible, and the greater part of the battalion was annihilated. The Russians followed, sweeping down the gullies on both sides of the forts, met the first supports, who stood up manfully to meet the attack, but were broken and carried away by the fury of the onslaught; followed on, down the slopes of the hills and into the valley, where they were met by fresh and stronger supports. These were also forced back, though more slowly, until they came to a low ridge or high bank running nearly parallel to the railway line. Here the Japanese had a splendid position, and new troops poured in to help to stop the Russian avalanche, and at this point a standing fight of the utmost fierceness ensued, lasting for about three-quarters of an hour. The din and the racket from rifles and machine guns were indescribable; at times even the rattling was indistinguishable. It all blended into one ear-splitting roar, the like of which I have never heard, though perhaps the roar of the blast rushing through a Bessemer converter approaches nearer than anything else I know.

For a long time the issue seemed doubtful. The Russians had the advantage of their search-lights playing upon their enemies, blinding and

confusing them. One moment the powerful light was glaring right in their faces, the next it was turned off, leaving them in the blackest darkness. They could see nothing, and had only the crack of the enemies' rifles to guide them in their fire. On the other hand, the Japanese were in an excellent position against the Russians down in the plains, and as their numbers increased rapidly, so that they soon had an overwhelming force assembled here, they were after a while able to take the offensive. Giving three banzais, they rushed down upon the Russians from front and flanks and drove them back the same way they had come, up the hills, past the forts, and behind the Chinese wall. The Russians retreated slowly, fighting with the greatest determination, but only from behind the walls of the covered way were they able to stop the attackers by a tremendous fire from rifles and machine guns. The Japanese, who had sustained terrible losses, were for the time being unable to push their attack further, and the fight in this part of the battlefield died down for awhile. It was then about one o'clock in the night.

The column of Russians which advanced down the gully to the east of East Panlung, and which was to work round to the rear of the Japanese troops in the captured forts, was met by the main body of the brigade of the 11th Division, massed here to carry out their part of the Japanese attack as planned, and against these forces the Russians were unable to make any headway. When the left column withdrew, they also retired behind the Chinese wall.

Meanwhile the 1st Division, where no sortie or demonstration had been made, commenced its operations as arranged. A strong detachment

marched against the entrenchments at the foot of Itzeshan and the Shuishi lunettes. The Russian searchlight from Itzeshan soon detected the moving troops, and we saw that, instead of seemingly flashing erratically all over the ground, it suddenly became fixed and immovable. Star shells bursting and lighting up the underlying country showed us the whereabouts of the Japanese troops.

Their advance was slow and cautious. The light blinded and confused them, and where they were exposed to its rays the Russian bullets fell fast and furious. With no means of retaliation against their enemies, hidden behind a stream of light, they had to take cover during the advance in declivities in the soil or behind small mounds or hillocks, where the rays of the implacable light could not reach them.

The Japanese artillery tried to destroy the light. We could see small clouds of smoke and dust springing up in front of it and for a moment draw a thin veil across it, and from our angle of observation we saw shells burst nearer and nearer. Suddenly the light went out. A shell which burst right in front of it had been lucky enough to hit it, we thought, and the night seemed doubly dark after. Taking advantage of this darkness, the Japanese advanced rapidly. There was no longer any need for caution; it was all-important to come to close quarters with the enemy before another light was turned upon them.

They had advanced to some 400 or 500 yards from the Russian positions—the star-shells told us that—when, suddenly, the light flashed out again. And not that alone, but the light from Golden Hill and another light from somewhere behind the Erhlung forts, which we had not seen until then, concentrated on them, and in the combined glare

of the three searchlights the Japanese stood out against the darkness like lantern pictures on a screen. Instantly a tremendous fire opened on them from rifles and, especially, from machine guns, which at this range played sad havoc amongst them on the coverless plain. They could see nothing, they could do nothing; death was everywhere, and they knew not how to evade it; they were blind and helpless. Even the bravest recognized that there was but one thing to do—to get away, away from the slaughter, away from the cruel light, back to their own camps, back to the night and the darkness. The Japanese tried to bring their machine guns into action from positions outside of the range of the searchlights, but no sooner did the rattle of one commence—it is easy to distinguish between the sounds of the Japanese and Russian machine guns—than star-shells went up and instantly detected it, a searchlight was turned on it, and the Russian quick-firers commenced their pom-pom-pom, quickly putting it out of action. It was no use; the attack was helplessly broken, and though the fire flashed up again at intervals, no really serious attempt was made afterwards to carry the Russian trenches.

The left brigade of the 11th Division, which made a demonstration against the south-eastern forts, was met in the same way with the same result—heavy losses and no progress.

It had been a disastrous night for the Japanese. Although the Russians had not succeeded in retaking the Panlung forts which they had lost on the previous day, they had swept the Japanese troops from the positions beyond the Chinese wall, and they had inflicted very heavy losses on them. The Japanese that night lost over 5,000 men killed and wounded. They were beaten back

everywhere. The Russians had crossed and annihilated their plans, they had taken the offensive, and for a long time, until the Japanese forces became too strong, they had been victorious. This gave them renewed confidence in themselves, and their means of defence, and in their capable chief. From this day forwards the Russians ever fought with the greatest gallantry, and, though often beaten, they have in the more important cases held their own against their equally brave and tenacious enemies.

In spite of their heavy losses and the reverses of the night, the Japanese hated to confess themselves beaten. They had been so certain of taking Port Arthur by direct assault, and had built so much on it, that they would not give in. At dawn the 9th Division and the right brigade of the 11th Division made a last desperate attempt to carry out General Nogi's orders for the attack, which the Russians had forestalled and brought to nought. The troops reformed their thinned ranks, and, under cover of a violent artillery fire, advanced through the Panlung forts, drove the Russians away from the Chinese wall, and marched against the Wantai fort. The brigade of the 11th Division turned eastwards to try to take the North Kikuan fort by an assault from the rear, as pre-arranged, but they were met by such a furious fire from this and the neighbouring forts that they had to seek cover, unable to move a step either against North Kikuan or Wantai fort. Entrenching themselves, they stayed the whole day, without making any further attempt to carry out their part of the programme.

The 9th Division was of sterner stuff. Although these troops had borne the brunt of the previous fighting, and although their losses had

been very severe, they went to work undaunted, showing the most reckless bravery. In the face of a murderous fire, they climbed the north-eastern slopes of the high, steep Wantai hill, attacking the fort on its summit from this direction. They worked their way close under the walls of the fort, but as the expected support from the 11th Division did not arrive, they had to retreat and entrench themselves on the hill-side.

Seeing that this last attempt also had failed, and that it would be folly to persist in the hopeless task, General Nogi, at two o'clock in the afternoon, gave orders to his troops to retreat after dark. The bombardment, which from early dawn had been the most violent, from the Russian as well as from the Japanese side, witnessed so far, died down slowly. It burst out again at intervals, but with steadily decreasing force, and at last it died down altogether, like the weeping of a child who sobs itself to sleep, and silence reigned once more again around Port Arthur, after six days of continuous strife.

The Russian sortie in the night of August 23rd will probably be omitted from the Japanese official report. It is not a thing they like to speak of. When we who heard so much and saw so much sought further details at the divisional headquarters, the Japanese made light of the night's work, and endeavoured to place it on a par with the many other Russian sorties; but we know, and friends amongst the officers of General Nogi's staff told us later, that this night's reverse was the heaviest and most disastrous experienced by the Third Japanese Army during the whole campaign.

CHAPTER VIII

RETROSPECT

THE general attack on Port Arthur had failed. The question naturally presents itself whether the Japanese ever stood a chance of taking the place by direct assault, and, if so, what caused the collapse of their plans.

The first part of the question is the most difficult to answer. As the assault did *not* succeed, it is impossible to say what would or might have happened if certain things had turned out differently, and if the Japanese had obtained advantages which they undoubtedly might have gained with a little good luck and a little better strategy. It is my personal belief that, at a certain moment and given certain circumstances, the Japanese really had a chance, and that the dividing line between victory and defeat was for a brief space of time very vague and undefined.

It seems to me, and I have heard my opinion corroborated by Russian officers who personally took part in these fights, that if the Japanese had been able to push a large force forward just at the crucial moment, when, on August 22nd, they had driven the Russians out of the Panlung forts, and had followed up their advantage here, regardless of the losses which the neighbouring forts could have inflicted on them; if they had rushed every available regiment through the breach, detailing three

or four to grapple with Wantai and the nearest battery positions which barred the way to the town, and had marched the others down to the harbour, their efforts might have been crowned with success.

The Russian forces were somewhat demoralized. Russian soldiers are children of the moment, impressionable and easily moved by changing circumstances. From the deepest gloom to the most radiant hopefulness is but a step with them. If things go well, there are no braver or better soldiers in the world; but after continuous reverses they are apt to lose heart and give in. Now, in this campaign they had lost faith in themselves; they had been beaten every time they met the Japanese, and they knew the same had been the case with their comrades in the north. Their officers had told them that Port Arthur was impregnable, infinitely stronger than any position they had had to defend hitherto, and that here was the place to retrieve all their previous losses, keeping the Japanese in check until Kuropatkin's legions arrived from the north and the Baltic fleet came from overseas and opened the way to victory and freedom. And now they had found that these same troops, which had driven them from strong positions, at Nanshan, at Ojikeisan, at Takushan, had succeeded, at the first attempt, in breaking through the lines of this "impregnable" fortress. If, then, the Japanese, risking all, had pushed on with their entire force, reached the town and destroyed the magazines and stores, I think it possible that the garrison would have lost heart and Port Arthur would have fallen. I understand the difficulties, I realize what the cost in lives would have been; but in a desperate game like this it is everything or nothing. This, as I have

tried to prove, the Japanese did not do, with the result that their attempts ended in failure.

It is useless to ponder over what might have been. Let us rather consider the other question What was it that caused the Japanese reverse?

As I see it, the reasons were of two distinctly different descriptions; those furnished by the strength of the fortress, the excellent tactics of the Russian commander, and the fortitude of his brave army; and those which were founded on the Japanese mistakes, not only their failure to appreciate the difficulties they had to surmount, but also in their tactics, the ways they adopted to overcome these difficulties. The subject of the latter I have already touched upon in this and previous chapters, but the Russian side of the question may be well worth considering.

In the first place, the fortress was a good deal stronger than the Japanese had imagined. Especially did they find it a great disadvantage that the different forts had been so placed and constructed that they mutually assisted and protected each other. They directed their main attack against what they knew to be the weakest point of the enemy's lines, the semi-permanently fortified Panlung redoubt, but events proved that it was impossible to restrict the fighting to this position. They had, as events proved, to fight another half-dozen forts at the same time, all of which could take active part in the defence. After sustaining enormous losses, they succeeded in capturing the Panlung forts; but the fire from the neighbouring forts and battery positions made it impossible to make any use of their conquest for offensive purposes, and for weeks the daily butcher's bill which they had to pay for the retention of these positions was a very heavy one.

As to the permanent forts of Port Arthur, the Japanese, with the exception of a few men who never came back, had never been near them, and it was not until months afterwards that they attempted to take them by assault, and so obtained a full knowledge of their strength. Had they known in August what they learnt late in October, I think it is very doubtful if the general attack would ever have been made.

Another factor in the affair was the excellent tactics of the Russians. Unable as they were to locate, without a balloon, the admirably-masked batteries of the Japanese, or to observe the effect of their fire against them, the Russians wisely refrained from replying to the challenge to a duel, saving their ammunition till the infantry began to move. They kept to their bomb-proofs, well knowing that even the heaviest bombardment that the Japanese could bring to bear upon them would have little effect against their strong forts, and that there was no need of action until the infantry began to attack.

General Stoessel proved himself again on this occasion, as during the whole of the previous campaign, a very able leader. His counter-attacks, especially in the night of the 23rd, demonstrated, as I tried to make clear in a former chapter, that he was fully capable of grasping a difficult situation, and by a timely, well thought out, and energetic counter-move, of turning it to his own advantage. Furthermore he had the faculty, only given to leaders of men, of fully understanding his soldiers. At the critical moment, when they were beaten and their spirits broken, he filled them with new hope and confidence, and, letting them take the offensive, brought out their inborn bravery and gallant spirits. He knew that he

had the battalion which the Japanese had pushed forwards to the foot of Wantai hill, at his mercy. He would begin his attack here. His men would be able to beat them, perhaps annihilate them, and this first success would, he knew, react on his men, and—impressionable and easily influenced as they were—change a half fatalistic acceptance of inevitable disaster into a glad belief in their ability to beat the Japanese after all. As I have pointed out before, events proved how correctly he had gauged his own men.

His good generalship showed itself also in taking every advantage of the excellent means of defence at his disposal, both passive and active, and I think it might be of interest at the present juncture to examine a little closer those means of defence with which the Japanese at this first attack became acquainted. Those that developed as the siege progressed and as new surprises were sprung upon them, I shall take up for similar treatment.

The forts against which the Japanese made their attack were all, with the exception of North Kikuan, of a semi-permanent nature. They were earthworks, with bomb-proofs constructed of timber and sandbags. The Lungyen redoubt had a fairly large and deep moat in front, and the Shuishi lunette had a smaller one, but neither the escarps nor the counter-escarps were built in stone or concrete, and the moats were undefended by any kind of caponiers.

The strongest passive means of defence of these forts were the single or double rows of wire entanglements by which they were surrounded. The width of an entanglement was generally some seven or eight feet; the wire was fixed to poles, placed at intervals of about three feet,

firmly rammed into the ground, but not set in concrete, as is generally the case in Europe. The wire, which was strung between the poles lengthwise and crosswise in every direction, was very hard and strong, and in most places the Japanese shears (they had brought out about 50,000 with them) proved absolutely useless.

Under these circumstances the Japanese tried many other devices for cutting an opening through the entanglements. As the wires proved too strong, they first endeavoured to bring down the whole arrangement by cutting the poles, and in one case (at the taking of 174 Metre Hill) they succeeded in doing so. But the experiment was, as far as I know, not again repeated. The men were fully exposed to the bullets of the enemy, and,—well, they decided to find some cheaper means.

For a short time another expedient had better luck. A man would crawl up during the night and fix ropes to the tops of some of the poles, and then with the ends of the ropes steal back again to the nearest trenches. His comrades here would then haul and pull, with an *ichi, ni, san*, bringing part of the obstruction down bodily. The Russians soon found out what was happening, and next time the Japanese tried the same game they found that the poles had been wire braced, and all their tugging was of no avail.

Another mode of proceeding was this: long bamboo poles, filled with black, strong smoke-giving powder, were placed under the entanglement, a fuse was lit, and so blasted part of the wire. These poles, by the way, were sometimes used at attacks on bomb-proofs and caponiers in the forts, being pushed through the loopholes or the entrances and burst, the heavy black smoke

choking and blinding the defenders, and drawing a thick opaque veil in front of the attackers, screening them from the view of their enemies.

Sometimes men, each protected by one of their big shields, would walk up in broad daylight and quietly set to work in sight of the defenders to cut the wire. The weight of each shield, made up of two $\frac{1}{4}$ in. iron plates welded together, is about 80 lbs. The small

hole at the top enables the wearer to see his way. His task is done through the slit at the bottom of the shield. The shield reaches below the knees, and is slung from the shoulders. He can walk very slowly, and would not have much chance even in a race with a tortoise. The first man who was sent out was met by a number of rifle shots, which hit him right in the chest; the bullets did not penetrate the shield, but the impact of the bullets, which hit him with the



STEEL SHIELD.

force of a sledge-hammer blow, toppled him clean over. He was not hurt, but got on his feet again, and though he was hit over and over again, and the impact of the bullets made him stop and stagger, he was prepared now and reached the entanglements. Sometimes the man would brace himself with two bamboo sticks, the upper ends of which were firmly fixed to a rope round his waist, while the lower ends were

hanging down and dragging along the ground behind him. When the shock of the bullets, which beat against his shield, made him lose his balance, these bamboos would take hold in the ground and stop him going over. This proved, naturally, a very desperate measure, and was seldom used.

The most general way was as follows :—The soldiers or sappers crept up after dark and, with the greatest precautions, approached the entanglements. Here, lying on their backs, they tried to cut the wire with shears. These, as I have mentioned, were not of much use, and I was told that the men sometimes got into such a rage that, dropping their shears, they tackled the wire with hands and teeth, and by twisting, tugging and biting, succeeded in doing what their shears would not accomplish. I do not vouch for this, though I heard it from Japanese officers ; anyhow, *si non e vero, e bene trovato*, and certainly most Japanese soldiers have splendid teeth. Later on, stronger, long-handled shears were provided, which, forcibly applied, successfully achieved their purpose.

When the searchlight rays played on the men under the entanglements, they feigned to be dead or wounded, but so soon as it was turned away, on they went with their work again. The Russians, of course, soon found this out, and afterwards they made sure that everybody in the vicinity of the wire entanglements was—well, what he appeared to be ; and nothing, not even men with a stretcher or under a Red Cross flag, was held sacred by them.

Of the active means of defence, the searchlights and the machine guns undoubtedly come in the first rank. I have in a previous chapter tried to convey some idea of the effect of the former on

the besiegers. This important service was worked with the greatest skill and ability. The way the star-shells and the searchlights were made to support each other in detecting the enemy, and the handling of the searchlights to make them perform a double task—illuminating the fields over which the enemy passed, and also blinding and confusing him—was excellent. That the Russians have mastered more than the A B C of this service, they fully demonstrated by the clever way they used a searchlight to lure the troops of the 1st Division into a death-trap, by making them believe that the light had been put out by one of the Japanese shells.

As I said before, the Japanese do not care to discuss the events of the night of August 23rd, or to admit that the affair was a very serious thing. Neither do they like to acknowledge the extent of the damage caused by the Russian searchlights, but it is nevertheless a noteworthy fact that after August 23rd no night attack was ever made by the Japanese on any place where the rays of the light could reach them, whilst all the Russian sorties and counter-attacks have been made at night when they could have the great assistance of their powerful lights.

Though the Japanese are loath to admit this point, there is another to which they all agree, and that is of the immense value of the Russian machine guns to the defence. The searchlights are stationary, they say, and the ground around Port Arthur is so broken that they can get away from them and avoid them; but the machine guns can be moved about everywhere, and can be easily shifted from place to place by a couple of men. It is nearly impossible to detect them and put them out of action, and their effect on the

Japanese was most disastrous, and time after time enabled the Russians to beat off their attacks, inflicting severe losses. Nothing can stand against them, and it is no wonder that the Japanese fear them, and that even the bravest have a chilly creeping down their backs, when the enemy's machine guns commence to beat their devil's tattoo. They shoot with an amazing precision, even at very long range, and they were splendidly served.

The Russian machine guns are 8 millimetre calibre, the Japanese 6·5 millimetre. The latter are the Hotchkiss patent, mostly manufactured at Tokyo Arsenal; the former, it may be of interest to note, are supplied by Messrs. Vickers, Sons & Maxim, London.

CHAPTER IX

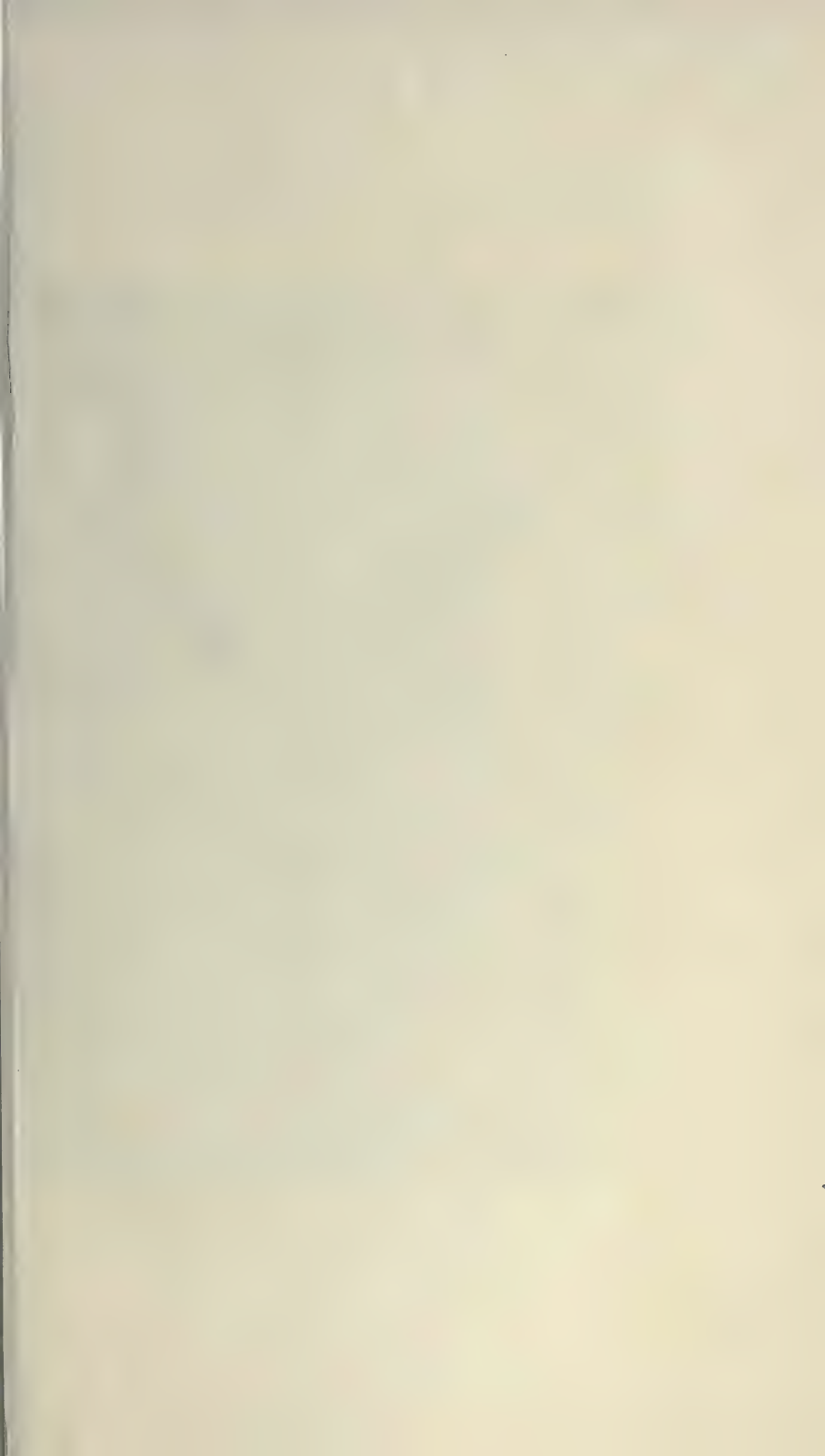
AFTER THE BALL

THE first few days after the general attack the Japanese seemed stunned. They had felt sure of being in Port Arthur by now, and all their plans for the future campaign had been based on this assumption. Their mortification at having been unable to perform what they knew was expected from them at home gnawed at their heart-strings and plunged them into the deepest gloom. They realized that they would have to undertake a regular siege, and they knew the magnitude of such operations against the large fortress, the fort line of which extended over some twelve miles; the length of time it would take them, the heavy cost it would involve, the effect on the operations in the north of their detention here. They had lost over 15,000 men during these six days, and another 3,000 or 4,000 in driving back the enemy's outposts at Takushan and at the hills out to the west near Louisa Bay—nearly as many as they had calculated the capture of the whole fortress would cost them. The central division had lost almost half of its numbers. Some of the regiments had been practically wiped out. On August 25th the 7th regiment, which had borne the brunt of the fighting at East Panlung, could only muster six officers and 208 men, and other regiments had fared nearly as badly.

Their guns had proved quite ineffective against the strong forts. The bombardment, lasting for several days, had been very violent, and the silence of the enemy's guns led them to believe that their own fire had compelled the Russian gunners to keep to their bomb-proofs and made it impossible for them to man their guns. Then later they had found that these same "silenced" guns suddenly opened fire, playing havoc with the attacking forces.

They believed that they had discouraged and demoralized the garrison by the long-sustained, heavy bombardment, and they found, on the contrary, that the Russians had come out from their positions and met and beaten them in the open field.

It was a hard blow to the Japanese to learn that they had been wrong in their calculations everywhere as to the strength of the fortress, the effectiveness of their own offensive power, and the moral and numerical weakness of the enemy; and it took them some days to swallow and digest the bitter pill. But this state of things did not last long. The Japanese soldier is a *man* in the full significance of the word. It was hard to acknowledge themselves beaten—for the first time in this war; but once they had realized this fact and that the methods they had adopted to gain their ends had been unavailing, they did not sit down and ponder over what might have been, and they did not, like the Russians at Plevna, obstinately adhere to the same methods and go on running their heads against the wall. They manfully accepted the situation and set to work to reach their goal by other means and along other roads. They realized that it was hopeless to attack the fortress across open fields, leaving





to the enemy all the advantages of their immensely strong defences. They may have thought that they could overcome, at least partly, the inequality of positions by attacking at night and advancing under cover of darkness ; but the enemy's search-lights soon dispelled this illusion and made these attacks even more difficult than in broad daylight.

There was only one thing left : to make some arrangements by which their own men should be as well sheltered during their advance as the defenders behind their ramparts. Earth must combat earth. Not a step must be taken without a wall of earth or sandbags in front to stop the enemy's bullets. Bomb-proofs must be built on the way, where the men could rest and sleep when relieved from duty. Miles and miles of these saps must be dug, sometimes through soft alluvial soil, sometimes through shale rock, sometimes through rock made up of a conglomeration of limestone, flint and quartz, so hard that it had to be chiselled out.

The saps could not advance in straight lines towards the forts ; that would, of course, expose them to an enfilading fire. They must be dug in zigzag lines, always presenting a protecting wall to the enemy. In this case, it was not a question of protecting their men against one fort only, but from forts out to the left and to the right as well, so these saps or approaches had generally to be made more winding and more parallel to their base than in ordinary cases. It would be a long and slow and tedious process, and it was likely to cost them many lives, but it was the only way, and they accepted the situation and set to work without demur.

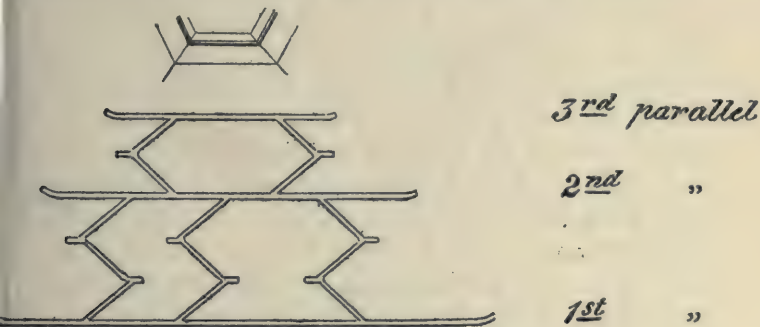
The saps may be divided in two classes, the approaches, and the siege parallels. The former,

as their name indicates, are the roads leading up to the positions which are to be attacked, winding considerably to avoid being taken under enfilading fire. The parallels may be regarded as defence works for the approaches, allowing a sufficient force to be assembled here to withstand the counter-attacks of the enemy. The number of parallels depends, of course, on the distance from the base (or the first parallel) up to the fort and on the conformation of the ground, but also on the stubbornness of the defence and the force and determination of the attacks on the sap-heads. Hence the distance between the parallels will give an indication of the more or less resolute manner in which the defence is carried out. At Port Arthur there were many parallels.

In old days, before the time of the long-range guns, where distances were shorter and everything could be done methodically and more according to rules and to fixed formulas, there were at any regular, well-conducted siege three parallels, generally with two or three rows of approaches leading from one to the other. In those days guns were usually placed in the parallels in order to be nearer to and more efficacious against the ramparts they were to batter, so the parallels had to be quite elaborate, large, and well-equipped with gun stands, bivouacs, &c. The sketch will give an idea of the old-time system.

In our days all this has been changed or modified. There is no longer such regularity about the sap works. The windings of the approaches are generally shorter and closer together, following the undulations of the ground regardless of uniformity or neatness. The guns shoot as well or better from their positions thousands of yards

away than from a distance of so many hundred yards down in the parallels, where they, moreover, would certainly be destroyed within a short time. The parallels as well as the approaches can, therefore, be made narrower, the average width of the former being about eight feet and of the latter some three or four feet. In front of Port Arthur they were provided with sandbag breastworks on the side facing the enemy, and were made deep enough for a man to walk upright in them. The breastworks in front of the parallels



THE OLD-TIME SAPPING ARRANGEMENT.

were provided with loopholes, and in the approaches nearest to the attacked fort small wooden mortars for dynamite bombs were placed. Where the soil was very hard, as, for instance, near Sungshuh and Erhlung, where the sappers had to work through solid rock, both the depth and the width of the approaches were reduced, and the men had to crouch down when passing through here. In several cases, one approaching sap only was dug, but the general procedure was to open up two approaches simultaneously, and, when the saps had been carried forward far enough, to connect them by a new parallel.

Another thing which the Japanese also realized during the days of the general attack, and learnt still more clearly during the next fortnight, was that their guns were not powerful enough against the forts and the heavy ordnance of the enemy. It became evident to them that the casemates and the bomb-proofs in the forts had withstood even their heaviest bombardment, and that more and heavier guns would have to be brought from home.

Finally, the thinned ranks of the infantry had to be filled up again, and a much increased engineer force was necessary to hasten the progress of the sapping.

The Japanese, it will thus be seen, were fully occupied during the next following weeks. Saps were opened against all positions where attacks were intended, and first and foremost towards the captured Panlung forts to place them in safe communication with their base. As the way from the exit of the donga to the forts was comparatively short and the soil not very hard, this part of the work was speedily completed.

From August 28th to the middle of September the reinforcements of men and guns arrived, about 16,000 infantry, mostly men of the second reserve, three companies of sappers, several batteries of quick-firing guns, twenty 4·7 in., and six 6 in. naval guns, and the first six of the eighteen 11 in. howitzers, which played such an important rôle during the latter part of the siege operations.

Meanwhile the Russians had begun to assume the aggressive. Each night sorties were made against the captured Panlung forts, in every case unsuccessfully. The Japanese had at once set to work to strengthen the forts against Russian attacks ; new trenches were dug and new breast-

works built; some of the old bomb-proofs could still be used, and new ones were constructed, so that the garrison could be strengthened from day to day. The forts were submitted to intermittent heavy bombardments, and sniping from the Chinese wall and the nearest Russian positions went on uninterruptedly day and night. The Japanese casualties for the first couple of weeks averaged a hundred a day in each fort until, by about September 8th, their improved condition forced the Russians to give up the idea of retaking them, although the sniping was kept up to the end of the chapter. I visited the forts some time afterwards, and found them so honeycombed with saps and trenches and so filled up with breastworks and bomb-proofs that it was impossible to form any idea of what they had looked like before the Japanese captured them.

Seeing the impossibility of recapturing the forts, the Russians, in order to diminish their value to the enemy as an *appui* for a later attack, set to work to fortify the Chinese wall to a much greater extent than before, not only behind the Panlung forts, but along its whole length. During the attacks on August 22nd and 24th the Japanese had been able to rush the Chinese wall without much difficulty and send troops across to the other side for an attack on Wantai fort. But this line of communication between the forts formed too important a link in the whole system of defence for the Russians to allow it to happen again. They therefore set to work with a will, and soon put it in such a state of defence that it became a real *enceinte* along the whole eastern fort-ridge, against which the Japanese later on had to approach by means of saps in the same way as against the forts which it connected.

When the Japanese had brought their sappers some little distance away from their base, the Russians nightly commenced to make attacks on the men working in the trenches. A small party of soldiers would steal down under cover of darkness, and, dashing suddenly upon the sappers, kill them with bullets or bayonets or dynamite bombs, destroying in a few minutes a whole day's laborious work.

After August 23rd the Russians only made one sortie on a bigger scale. It was during the night of the 27th. Ever since the beginning of the general attack on the 19th the weather had been perfect, though very hot. But in the evening of the 27th a heavy thunderstorm passed over the peninsula, and, taking advantage of this, the Russians made an advance along their whole front. The rain came down in sheets, and we had long ago been compelled to retreat to our tents at the foot of Fenghoangshan and were soundly asleep, when, about two o'clock in the morning, we were awakened by the rattling of rifles and machine guns, which opened up in a way that left no doubt in our minds that something serious was on foot. Hastily donning our waterproofs, we scrambled up the steep, slippery sides of our hill, hot and wet and sleep-drunk. Once up there, all our grievances were forgotten in the sight that lay before us.

The night, black as the eternal darkness, formed a fitting background for the unique spectacle, the wonderful play of light and flame which fairly dazzled us when we reached the hill-top. With pauses of but a few seconds the darkness was rent by blinding blueish-white rays of the lightning which came shooting across the whole horizon from every side, now crossing their

yatagans of flame, like demons of darkness in a duel, now sailing forth like globes of fire which burst, flinging their rays in all directions and making, for a moment, the whole landscape stand out in a weird, pale light under the low sulphur-yellow clouds which chased each other under the inky sky. And there were other lights, narrow, sharply-defined cones of white light, passing over the hills and the valley in front of us, and sudden showers of radiant sparks, sinking slowly through the night. The Russians had no less than nine searchlights at work, more even than on the memorable night of the 23rd, and star-shells were sent up from all along their lines in rapid succession. The rain poured down in torrents, and as the passing light struck and clung to the rain-drops, making them shiver in their rays like dropping diamonds, the effect was of almost supernatural beauty. To complete the picture the flashes from the firing guns and bursting shells and shrapnel leapt forth everywhere and every second, looking red like glowing coal through all this white weird light.

Add to this the noise and roar of battle in the heavens and on earth, the rolling of never-ceasing thunder, and the booming and barking of guns of all sizes, the incessant rattling of rifles and machine guns, and now and again a tremendous thunder-clap which drowned all other sounds, making them seem tame and insignificant in comparison!

What was happening? We did not know, we could not follow, and we hardly cared. We were too much absorbed by the magnificent spectacle unfolded before us, and which nature and the wit of man had combined to make the most wonderful and brilliant we had ever seen. Later we learnt

that the sortie had been on a large scale, but had been everywhere repulsed. It lasted for more than an hour ; then the fire from guns and small-arms died down ; the thunderstorm abated, and not long afterwards the full moon shed its pale light on a scene of perfect peacefulness.

Of smaller sorties and counter-attacks there was at least one every night, and some few were made even in the daytime. They were carried out with the greatest determination, and though the Russians never succeeded in retaking the forts, they were able to inflict very serious losses on the garrison and to make life there a perfect hell. Some of the most desperate encounters during the siege took place on these occasions, and both sides fought with the most reckless bravery and savage fierceness.

Amongst the many trophies and objects of interest from the operations here which have been collected at General Nogi's headquarters—Russian rifles, parts of machine guns, shells of all sizes, sappers' tools, parts of contact mines and so on—there is an ordinary sword, of the small light type, without a guard, which the Russian officers generally wear slung in a bandolier over their shoulders. A wooden tag with an inscription in Chinese characters is affixed to it, giving in a few words the record of how it was taken. On August 30th a small force of about twenty Russians, under an officer's command, made a desperate attempt to rush West Panlung. They got into the fort, and a most furious hand-to-hand fight ensued, Japanese and Russians being mixed up in the wildest *mêlée*. The Russians fought like lions, and accounted for a great number of their enemies ; but the handful of men had no chance against the fourfold stronger garrison, and after a most heroic

struggle they were overcome and every man killed. The Japanese greatly admired this deed, and speak of the gallant Russian officer with the greatest respect and appreciation. His sword is sure to find a place of honour in some museum in Tokyo.

It was not only the Russian infantry which became aggressive about this time. The artillery, during the days of the general attack, succeeded in locating several of the Japanese batteries, and now they assumed the offensive. Although the excellent positions of the Japanese guns made it difficult for the Russians to put them out of action, they yet managed to give them a very bad time, and made sure that at the next attack the Japanese gunners should not have it so completely their own way as they had at first.

On September 2nd one of the Japanese naval batteries on the crest of a hill to the north-west of Shuishi village was completely smashed by 10 in. shells from Itzeshan and Laotiehshan forts. I had that day strolled out in that direction with two other correspondents, and so had the good luck to witness, at close range, a part of one of the hardest-contested artillery duels which took place here. The firing had not lasted long when we arrived, but the Russians were rapidly getting the exact range, and though the Japanese blue-jackets stood manfully to their guns and answered back as quickly as their opponents, it soon became evident that their guns really had no chance against the heavy fortress ordnance.

From our point of vantage we had an excellent view of the Japanese battery, but some hills in front of us prevented our seeing the enemy's lines, so after a while we went on to another hill, some 300 or 400 yards out to the right of the battery.

We passed over the crest with every precaution, and lay down on the southern slope amongst some big boulders, where it would not be easy to detect us in our khaki suits, and where we thought we could follow the fight in perfect safety. But we were not long left in peace. Suddenly there was a tremendous crash right over our heads, followed immediately by another as the shell struck the hill-side behind us and exploded. We looked at one another, but did not budge. We could not conceive that the Russians could afford to waste their 10-inch shells on three harmless war correspondents. But half a minute later another shell came roaring past us, so near that we could feel the pressure of the air, and it burst a little closer to us than the first one. We did budge then. We ran nearly up to the crest of the hill where an old infantry trench gave us good refuge, screening us from the view of the enemy, and crept along this some fifty or hundred yards to get out of the firing line; for even then we did not think that the shells were meant for us. We thought that one of the eastern forts had opened up against the battery, that their aim had been too high, and that we had happened to be just in the line where the shells were flying. We sat down for a little while, then, with the greatest caution, peeped out between some stones on the top of the trench. No sooner had we adjusted our glasses before, bang! bang! two other shells came flying, and burst some few yards behind us. This was getting serious. We leapt out of the trench, ran over the crest of the hill, and some distance down the other side, where we were completely out of sight of any of the forts, but even here a big brute of a shell came thundering right after us. This made us sulky; the

Russians made too much *bruit pour une omelette*, we thought, and as dinner time was drawing near, and we had a stiff hour's walk before us, we found that an excuse for making straight for camp. The Russians had, of course, taken us for Japanese officers observing their own battery's fire from a safe place.

I have been fired at, individually, more than once with rifles and even with guns, but it is the first and only time I have had the honour of being "personally conducted" by 10-in. shells.

I have mentioned this personal experience in order to show the vigilance of the Russian lookout, and still more in order to point to the recklessness with which during this period they spent their ammunition, so sorely needed during the last stages of the siege. To fire upon single individuals—even if they were staff officers—with 10-in. shells, is a waste of ammunition which even an unlimited supply scarcely can warrant.

We went up to the naval battery a couple of days later, and had an opportunity of seeing the effect of these same 10-in. shells. We found the strong breastworks and traverses smashed and battered to unwieldy mud-heaps; some of the guns had been demolished, while others had already been taken away. The bomb-proofs had been completely wrecked, and the whole place had so gone to wrack and ruin that it was impossible to recognize the strong, neat battery emplacement we had seen before. We saw also the hole which the last of "our" shells had made in the shale rock where it struck. It measured 20 ft. across, and was over 5 ft. deep. If it had struck so far in front of us as it did behind us, the hollow it had made would have given all three of us ample accommodation for ever after.



CHAPTER X

THE JAPANESE AMBULANCE AND HOSPITAL SERVICE

DURING the comparatively peaceful time which followed the stormy days of the first general assault it was more interesting to observe what was going on behind the fighting line than to watch the operations themselves. At the front everything was strangely quiet. We heard now and again the booming of big guns, and when we stopped and listened, by day or night, we could hear sniping going on all the time ; but we had become so accustomed to these sounds, and they seemed so tame and unexciting in comparison with the diabolical fracas we had experienced shortly before, that we scarcely paid attention to it. Meanwhile the sappers went on with their underground work, day and night, without rest or respite, and we could see how the dark zigzag lines were wriggling their way slowly towards the fortifications, and we could mark their progress from day to day.

At the back of the fighting lines everything was life and bustle. From our camp at the foot of Fenghoangshan we had a fine view over the broad stretch of flat country extending all round the northern side of the range. We had hitherto scarcely had time to give a thought to what was happening here, all our attention being turned

southwards, where the fighting was taking place ; but now we had plenty of leisure hours, and we soon found that it was well worth while to study the working and the inner structure of that huge engine of war, a modern army.

Most conspicuous amongst the sights before us during the first days after the big fight were the long lines of stretcher-bearers coming in from all directions, converging on the Changling railway-station. The stretchers were carried from the field hospitals by stalwart Chinese or Manchu coolies. At the front it was, of course, soldiers of the ambulance who did this work. During the whole siege this part of the ambulance service had been particularly difficult. It had been impossible to have the wounded men removed by daylight, as the Russians have been unable or unwilling to make any distinction between ambulance and ordinary soldiers. The carrying away of the wounded had therefore to be postponed until after dark.

The first night, according to the Japanese surgeon Inspector-General, the ambulance soldiers went out in couples with their stretchers as usual. As it was uncertain how the Russians would behave towards these parties, volunteers were called for, and twenty of the strongest and bravest were chosen for the perilous work. They set out, advancing without much caution, but were instantly fired upon from the Russian lines, and of the little party, three men were shot dead and ten wounded. The following night the ambulance men were sent out in pairs again, but without stretchers, and they advanced with the greatest circumspection ; but under the rays of the implacable searchlights they were soon detected and again fired on. So this method also had to be abandoned, and ever since

each soldier on ambulance duty has worked alone. Crawling up to a wounded man and taking advantage of every little unevenness in the soil, of every boulder or tuft of grass which would serve for cover, he took hold of the wounded man by a leg or arm or the collar of his coat and crawled back in the same way, dragging the poor wretch along the ground with hauls and jerks, to the nearest place of safety where a dressing-station had been established.

The sufferings of the wounded rescued under these conditions were terrible. To be dragged in that manner over the uneven ground, after lying in the broiling sun during the long, endless day, must have seemed to the poor fellows the very climax of cruelty. For to many of them exhaustion and the coolness of night may have brought the first cessation of torture just when they were thus disturbed. Yet they were well off compared with the hundreds who of necessity had to be left to rot on the hill-sides. I do not blame the Russians. In the first place, it was not always easy for them to know upon what errand the soldiers moving towards them were bound; they had some bad experiences with soldiers shamming dead and cutting their entanglement wires. Secondly, this war since the days of the battle of Nanshan had been a war *à l'outrance*. The main object has been to kill, and very little quarter had been asked for or given. A wounded man may recover and take up arms again—a dead man is finished with for ever.

Each division had an ambulance company of 200 men attached to it. This was divided into three sections under the command of a captain and two lieutenants, and besides these, each battalion had a certain number of private soldiers who

had been through a short course of ambulance training, and who, in cases of necessity, were employed for this service. The wounded were first taken to the nearest dressing station. The staff of these stations consisted of the battalion surgeons with their assistants (one surgeon per battalion) and here the wounded received the first attentions; provisional bandages and splints were put on; they were then carried on stretchers to the nearest field hospital. In this siege campaign it was a very difficult thing to find suitable places for the dressing stations. They should be as near to the fighting lines as possible, but as the siege proceeded and the troops approached closer and closer to the fortifications, it was exceedingly hard to find any dead ground close to the front where the tents could be pitched out of sight of the enemy. That the surgeons thought more of their duties to the wounded men than of their own safety is proved by the large number of them who were killed and wounded.

The organization of the Japanese army provides for six field hospitals for each division, each capable of receiving 200 wounded. The *personnel* of a field hospital consisted of three surgeons, one apothecary, and an accountant, all with officer's rank, and a certain number of non-commissioned officer and soldier assistants.

On arrival at the field hospital, the wounded man was taken in hand by the surgeon. His wounds were cleaned and dressed and properly bandaged; bullets were extracted, urgent, imperative amputations or operations carried out, and the man was then taken to one of the large round tents where with ten or twelve others he remained until he was fit to be moved on. He was not very comfortable here, the conditions being very

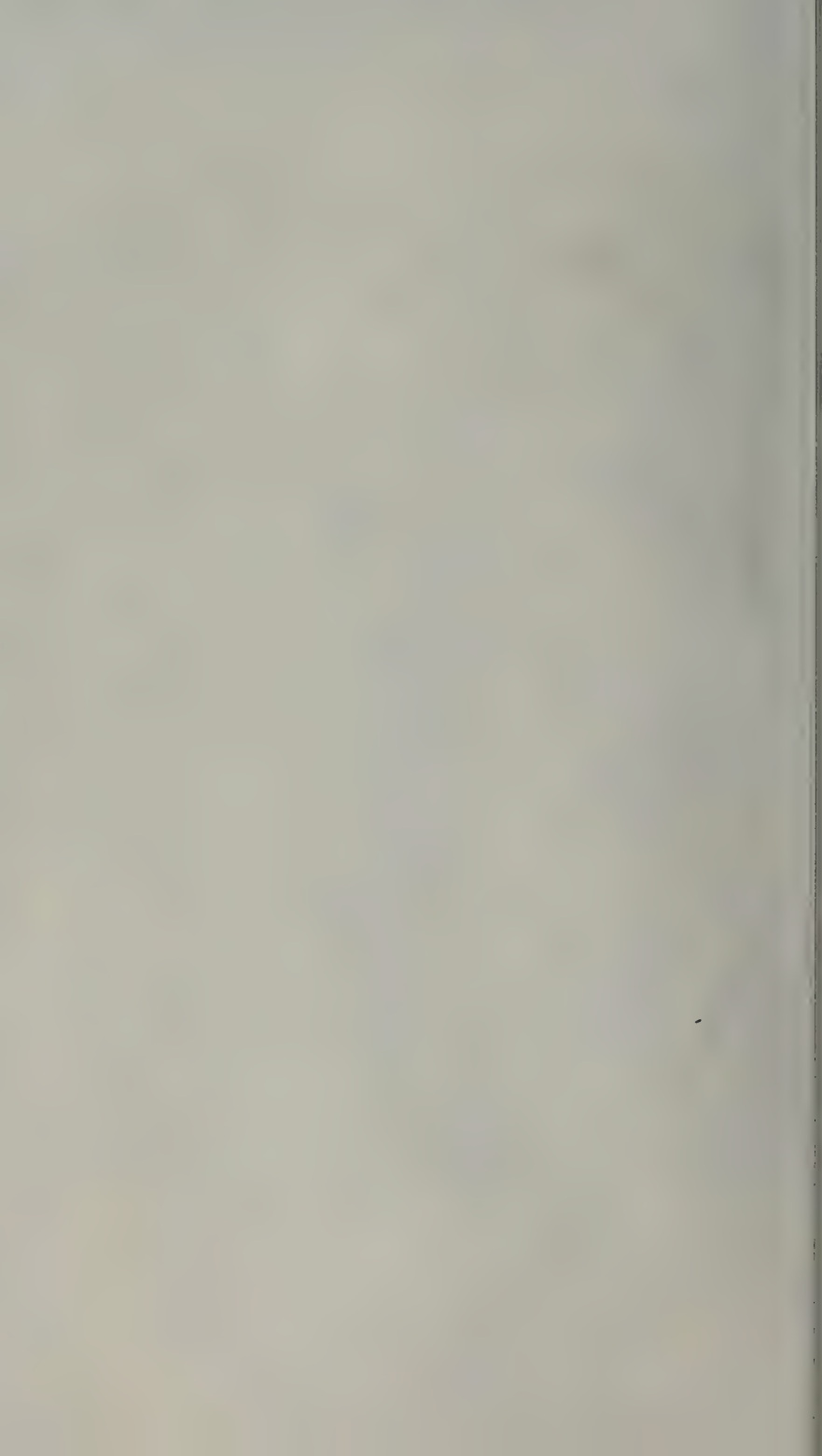
primitive, and I do not think a European army could manage with so little. Bandages, medicine, everything was of the cheapest. The wounded lay on floors of unplanned planks, without beds, mattresses, or pillows. They had not even a mosquito curtain to protect them from the numberless flies and the millions of mosquitoes, more poisonous and more ferocious here than anywhere else in the world.

Between the foot-hills, along the narrow valleys and winding gullies, right behind the infantry lines, often in front of the batteries, these tents, flying the Red Cross flag, were everywhere seen. Standing in one of them, it was difficult to know which to admire most—the skill, dexterity, and untiring care of the Japanese army surgeons, or the marvellous fortitude and endurance of the Japanese soldiers. With most horrible wounds, and during most painful operations, the wounded man lay there without uttering a groan. His teeth might gnash convulsively and the cold perspiration break out on his forehead when the pain became too acute; but only once—and then the man had had the whole fore part of his head and body burnt and torn to tatters by a high explosive shell—only once did I hear a moan or a cry.

It is said that the nervous system of the Japanese is not so highly developed as ours, so that the pain they feel is nothing to what we would suffer under similar conditions. The doctors say that their diet and entire mode of living is much more rational than our own, and that this prevents a great deal of suppuration and other complications. They also assert that the healthy physique of the Japanese makes their nerves less highly-strung than ours. If that is so, it may prove a blessing in disguise when the time comes



A JAPANESE FIELD HOSPITAL



that competition with the Eastern peoples and the over-population compel the Western nations to adopt the same rational way of living. Thank Heaven! it will not come in my time!

As might be expected, the percentage of shell wounds as compared to bullet wounds in this army was considerably greater than in a marching campaign. Statistics for July and August showed :—

	Per Cent.
Rifle (or machine-gun) wounds . . .	72'16
Shell (or shrapnel) wounds . . .	21'27
Bayonet, sword, &c., wounds . . .	6'57

The casualties in the infantry were comparatively greater than in the artillery, but much less so than during field operations. When sapping commenced the engineers suffered severely. Of the rifle wounds only a small percentage were head wounds, while of the shell wounds as much as 36'79 per cent. had been in the head. The following table is for the months June to October, both inclusive :—

	Head. Per Cent.	Body. Per Cent.	Upper limbs. Per Cent.	Lower limbs. Per Cent.
Rifles . . .	21'16	25'72	26'66	26'46
Shells, shrapnel . . .	36'79	18'90	23'18	21'13
Sundry . . .	22'47	12'83	25'26	39'44

A considerable number of the men taken away on stretchers were not wounded at all, but sick. The Third Japanese Army was particularly lucky in suffering comparatively little from epidemics or infectious diseases. The worst was a virulent diarrhœa, and typhoid fever. Statistics for July and August showed :—

	Per Cent.
Diarrhœa (July)	2'13
„ (August)	6'52
Typhoid fever (July)	0'0
„ „ (August)	0'10

But another sickness, not at all infectious, did more harm to the Japanese army here than the worst epidemic, namely, Beri-beri. This disease, supposedly caused by some microbe in the rice, is not uncommon in Japan, but apparently the microbe attains its fullest development in the climate of Southern Manchuria. The disease is not dangerous if taken in time, though it makes the patient unfit for service for a long period; but when allowed to take firm hold in a body it often proves fatal, the lower extremities becoming paralyzed, and death following from paralysis of the heart. Symptoms:—Headache, general weakness, pains in and swelling of the legs, especially the calves, and total inability to walk or even stand up. According to the statistics the total number of troops attacked was:—

June	81
July	1,511
August	8,069
September	6,165
<hr/>	
Total	15,826

The surgeon Inspector-general tried at first to overcome the difficulty by substituting wheat for rice; but during the rainy season much of the wheat went bad in transport, and the soldiers, who were accustomed to a rice diet, did not like wheat. The cooking of wheat was very difficult with the utensils at hand, so the scheme had to be abandoned. When, however, the disease grew to such great dimensions, the Inspector-general ordered a mixed diet of wheat and rice, and from the end of August the daily rations of the men were 2 lbs. rice and $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. wheat. This proved salutary, and the number of sick steadily decreased

after the new diet was adopted, though there was a fairly large number of new cases also in October and November.

The field hospitals had always to be ready to receive large numbers of wounded without warning or notice; therefore as soon as possible all wounded brought in were moved on to the divisional stationary hospital.

The stationary hospitals were the great reservoirs where the streams of wounded from the field hospitals flowed in and congregated, and from them were again sent out in batches on their long homeward journey. There was one stationary hospital to each division, generally established in a village at a safe distance from the firing lines, in the flat stretch of country behind the Fenghoangshan Range. These were quite large establishments, with an adequate staff of surgeons and assistants. The wounded were partly installed in tents, belonging to the field hospitals,* partly in Chinese houses, remaining there only until they gained sufficient strength to undergo the three hours' railway journey to Dalny.

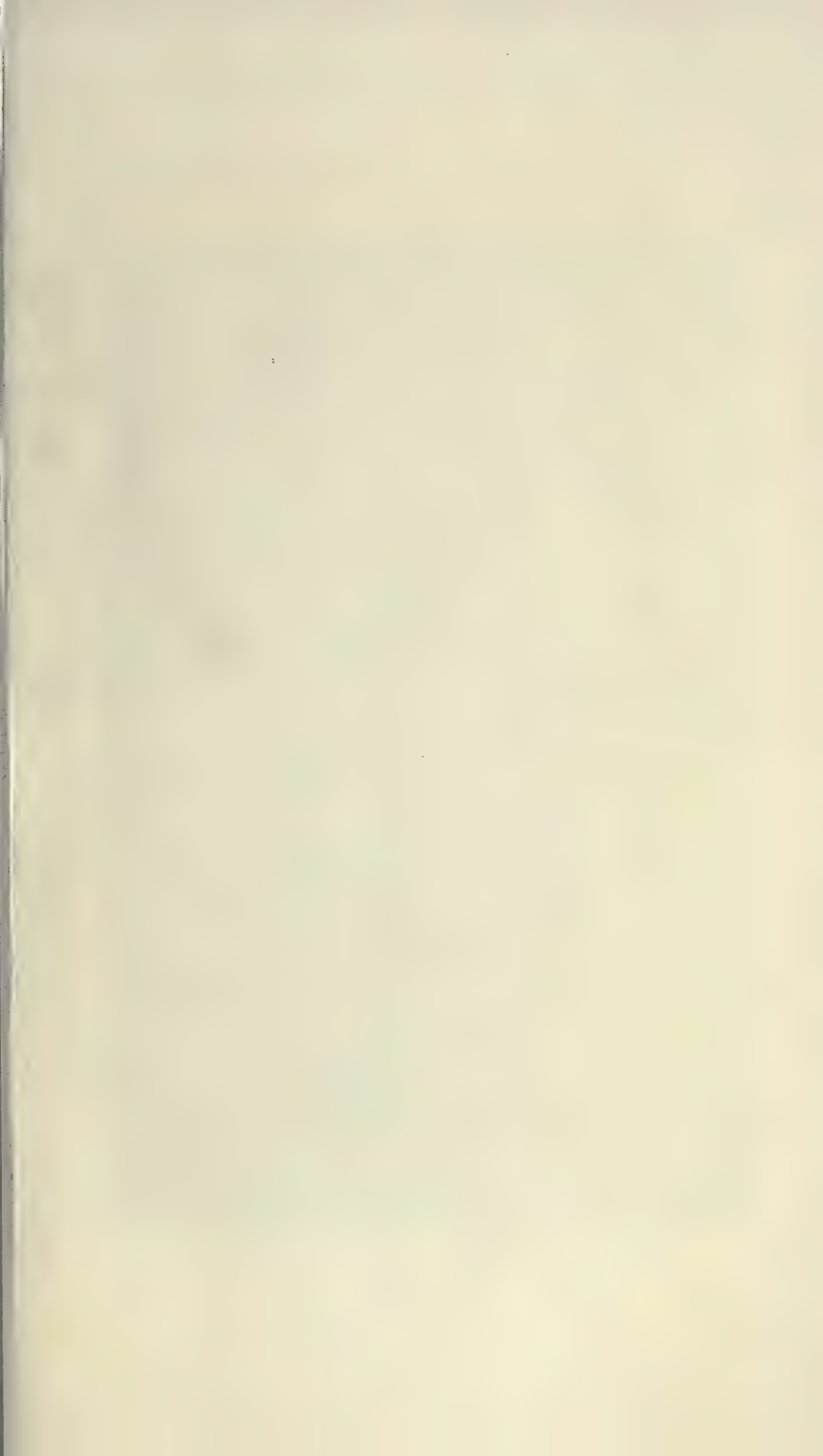
From the stationary hospitals the wounded men were sent down to Changling railway-station, some three or four miles behind Fenghoangshan, and conveyed, in open trucks and without anything but a blanket between them and the hard bottom of the car, to the base hospital in Dalny. Here they met for the first time with some comfort. The large hospitals were established in the cathedral and in some of the best houses in the town. The wounded were quartered in clean, airy rooms, laid to rest on good mattresses, and were even supplied with mosquito curtains; they

* Of the six field hospitals in each division, three were generally established as stationary hospitals.

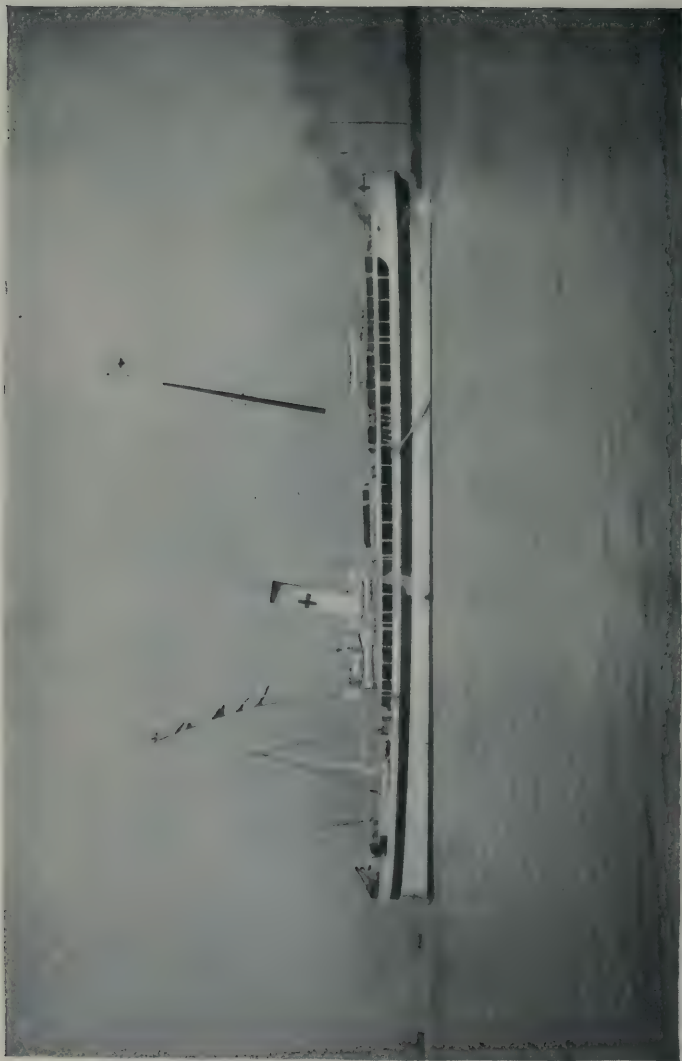
were looked after by skilful doctors, and nursed by sisters of the Red Cross Society of Japan. After all their sufferings and hardships, they must have imagined themselves in Paradise.

At the base hospital the wounded men were divided into two classes, the slightly wounded, who needed but a short treatment to enable them to return to the front, and the more seriously wounded, who required not only healing of their wounds, but a long rest and a thorough after-treatment, before they would be strong enough to take up again the hard life of a campaigning soldier. The men in the first of these classes were kept at the base hospital until they were fit for duty once more; the others were sent back to Japan on board the hospital ships so soon as the doctors pronounced them strong enough to stand the sea voyage. The principle throughout this campaign was that, where the slightest doubt existed as to the wounded man's speedy and complete recovery, he was sent back to Japan—very often against his own wishes. This was done as much out of regard for the wounded men as from considerations of the convenience of the hospital service at the front.

In this war, the Japanese armies had eleven hospital ships at their service. Two, the Kosai Maru and the Hakuai Maru, belong to the Red Cross Society of Japan, and two to the Japanese Government (the Kobé Maru and the Yokohama Maru). But as the number of casualties proved far greater than was expected, the Government chartered seven other ships and fitted them out for the purpose. Six of them (Hakuai, Kosai, Yokohama, Miyoshino, Tarien, Rohilla) plied between Talien Bay and Japan, carrying the wounded from the Third Army and also the



A JAPANESE HOSPITAL SHIP



slightly wounded from the armies in the north. The other five vessels carried the more seriously wounded from the First, Second, and Fourth Armies, those too weak for the railway journey, direct from Yinkow to Japan. Even with the extra seven steamers, the hospital fleet was kept fully occupied, sailing continuously to and fro between the base hospitals and Japanese ports. In Talien Bay especially, where both the Second and the Third Armies had established their base (Liushitun and Dalny), it was an everyday sight to see the beautiful white hospital ships, with a broad scarlet or green band painted all round each, and gaily decked out with large Japanese and Red Cross flags. Amongst the sombre-coloured gunboats, destroyers, and torpedo craft, and the black colliers and transports, a hospital ship showed up graceful and elegant—like a pretty girl surrounded by her father's elderly male friends.

These ships were as comfortable as they were handsome, having been passenger steamers of about 3,000 tons. When war seemed inevitable they were called in and placed at the disposal of the Government, being then fitted for their new work. Besides good accommodation for 200 sick and wounded, each vessel had an operation room, Röntgen rays apparatus, and was well equipped with modern instruments and appliances. Red Cross sisters assisted the doctors in attending to the wounded on board the ships.

From the beautiful ship the wounded man was taken to one of the depôt hospitals, in Moji, Ujina, or Osaka, and, from there, conveyed to the divisional hospital in his district as soon as he was fit for the journey. Here he stayed, in his own part of the country and near his own people, until

he was strong enough to return to the front again, or until he was given back to his family.

The ambulance system of the Japanese army may perhaps be better understood by the following diagram which shows all the stages the wounded man has to pass on the long journey from the battle-field to his home.

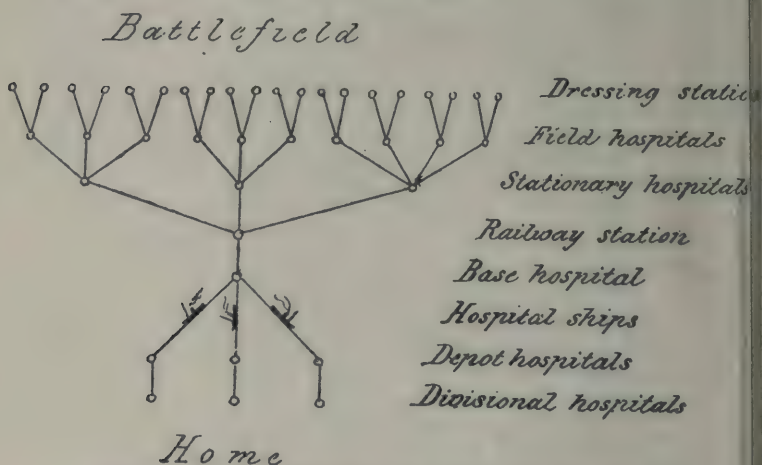


DIAGRAM SHOWING STAGES ON THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY OF A WOUNDED SOLDIER.

As will be perceived, the Japanese ambulance service is organized on very much the same lines as is usual in European armies, and there is not much to learn from them in this respect. Their entire outfit, bandages, stretchers (they have no proper ambulance wagons), beds, and so on, are cheaper and poorer, and the wounded men are given less comfort than would be tolerated in Western armies. One minor detail in this service I have much admired, and that is the neat and clever way in which their cases of medicine and instruments are packed. In a minimum of space they contain the greatest possible quantity, and

yet everything can be easily and accurately handled.

But if little can be learnt from their organization or equipment, any army would be proud of a staff so efficient, so brave, and so untiringly hard-working as the Japanese medical staff. In a single day as many as a thousand wounded have come into one field hospital, and although, inevitably, many had to wait for their turn a long time, the doctors gave themselves not a moment's rest until every man was properly treated and bandaged. It must be remembered also that in this campaign the wounds were of a much more hideous character than those inflicted during ordinary field operations. As the above statistics show, the percentage of shell wounds was more than double of what it is under ordinary circumstances, and the number of bayonet and sword wounds was comparatively large. Quite a number of men were wounded by dynamite and hand grenades also, and all of these wounds are very horrible and most difficult to treat successfully. There is still one other point to be noted. During this siege much rifle firing at close range, within fifty or a hundred yards, took place, and at this range rifle bullets inflict extremely dangerous wounds, resembling big pear-shaped holes, in the human body, similar to the wounds caused by dum-dum bullets. All praise, therefore, to the Japanese army surgeon. His hard and difficult work has been done without flinching, and it has been done well.

CHAPTER XI

CAMPS AND CAMP LIFE

AS the long, lugubrious lines of stretcher-bearers with their blood-stained burdens moved along the winding roads and paths through the fields where the Chinese farmers and labourers now were busy with their harvest, they met with other columns. These were the reinforcements now beginning to pour in to replace those carried away sick or wounded, and the others lying stiff and cold in their shallow graves all over the country-side. The first batch of reinforcements arrived on August 28th, but the bulk of the new troops, all men of the 2nd reserve, came in towards the middle of September. There were about 16,000, all looking fresh and neat in their new clean uniforms, so different from the men who had been campaigning and roughing it for months.

Most of these new troops were infantry. Some of them marched straight out to the fighting lines and were incorporated in the decimated ranks, but most went into camp close to where we had pitched our tents, and the whole plain in front of us was soon full of bustling life and gay with vivid colours; with large round white tents for the officers and long khaki-coloured bivouac shelters for the soldiers; rifles in neat little pyramids, scarlet blankets taken out for an airing

and put on the top of the shelters to keep the sun out; soldiers in hundreds and thousands, some lying lazily on the ground, others cleaning their rifles, cooking, chopping wood, or occupied with the hundred-and-one little tasks of their daily camp routine; orderlies and messengers on foot and on horseback; long lines of pack-horses coming in from the commissariat; laughter and chatting and singing; companies parading for drill; and sharp words of command, but never a bugle nor a drum to be heard. At night, when



SUMMER BIVOUACS.

the lanterns were lighted in tent and bivouac, and all the tiny camp-fires were going, the whole plain resembled a large city, and the distant din of voices, the neighing of horses, and the occasional sound of a concertina or a samisen helped to make the illusion more vivid.

The shelters are made of square pieces of waterproof canvas laced together in different ways, each soldier carrying a square together with a section of a thin, strong tent pole. The same method of carrying tents is used in many European armies; only in their case the pieces of

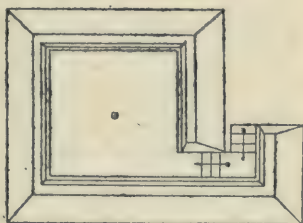
canvas which make up the *tentes d'abri* are generally triangular-shaped, while in the Japanese army they are square. A piece is about 3 ft. 6 in. square, and is provided with holes and laces along the sides.

In summer time the shelters are put up as shown on the sketch in order to keep the sun out and let the air in, and this was the way the bivouacs looked during the first three weeks after the arrival of the troops.

But in these regions there is no autumn. From blazing hot summer to bitterly cold winter is but a step. On October 3rd the change came. I had been out to Shuishi that morning, and to the lunettes to the south of this village which had been captured a fortnight before; on my way to the headquarters of the 1st Division the sky suddenly became overcast, and heavy clouds came sailing swiftly across from north-east. In a few minutes the whole sky looked black like thunder, and thinking it was a heavy rain-shower, I hurried as fast as I could to headquarters, where I had scarcely arrived before the storm broke out with the force of a hurricane, overturning tents or tearing them to tatters, and playing havoc all over the camp. I recognized at once that this was no ordinary wind; it was my old acquaintance the Manchurian dust-storm, and well I knew what that meant. It was rather late in the afternoon, and in such weather and over such roads I wanted to be home before dark, so, mounting my horse, I at once set out for our camp. And then the veritable storm broke loose. What we had had hitherto proved only the vanguard of the real tempest. I saw the dust, like a yellowish black wall blotting out from sight everything beyond it, come moving towards me with the velocity of an

express train, and in a few seconds I was in the thick of it. The wind was so strong that it nearly lifted me bodily out of my saddle, the dust filled my eyes and my nostrils and every pore in my skin, lashing my face like a thousand pin-pricks, and making my eyes smart as from burning hot fumes. The eight miles' ride home in face of the gale was by far my worst experience of this kind.

The storm, as is usual here, lasted for three days, and when it was over it had swept the summer clean off the face of the earth, and, although we had many a fine day later on, the season of winds



DUG-OUT FOR WINTER BIVOUAC.

had commenced. The winter was in the air, and the nights were very cold. From khaki and the lightest of underwear we had to don warm winter clothing, and we had to shift our camp to the bottom of a deep donga, where the winds could not reach us. With the soldiers it was, of course, the same. Their whole camp had to be rearranged, and they had many ingenious ways of making things snug and comfortable. If close to some steep hill, big holes were dug out in the hill-side, and there they fixed their quarters. In some places they built nice little houses of a few sticks of timber and turf, and sometimes sandbags, but on the plains the most common

130 THE SIEGE OF PORT ARTHUR

arrangement was to dig a large square hole about 3 ft. deep in the ground, with perpendicular walls, and with steps leading down to the floor.

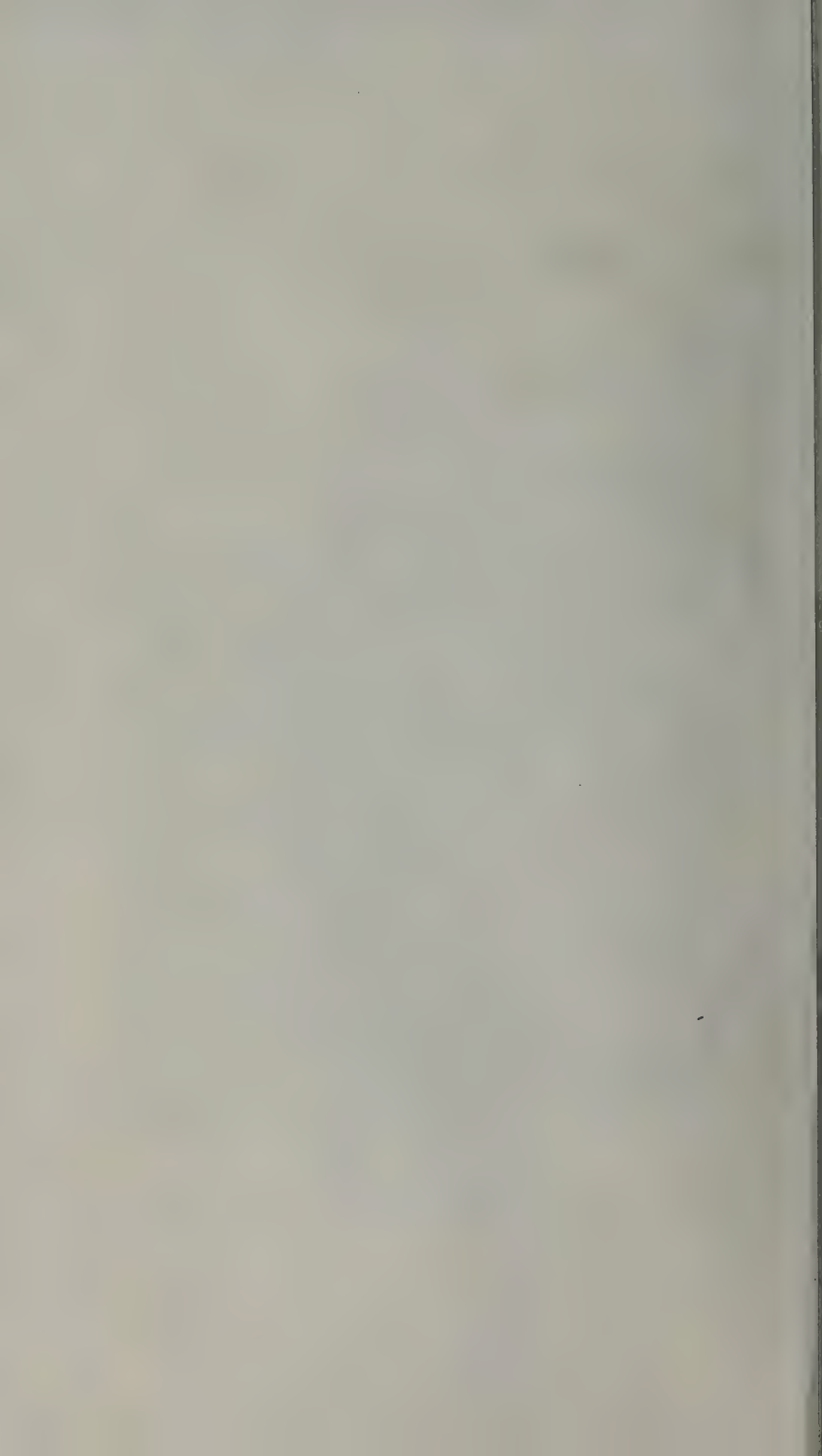
Where the soldiers slept the ground was covered with mealie-stalks and husks, while in the central part the floor was hard-stamped earth. This was roofed in under waterproof canvas sheets, laced together, with the ends buried in the earth. These bivouacs are excellent in a country where there is little snow. They are snug and warm, and well ventilated. In the perpendicular sides the soldiers dug out small square niches wherein to stow their rations and personal belongings. The whole arrangement was neat and ingenious, and the lucky fellows who stayed in one were very comfortable.

Later on, when the real winter set in with snow and bitterly cold gales from the north, even these arrangements had to be improved. The canvas roofs were taken away, and roofs of mat-covered timber with a thick layer of earth on top substituted; the dug-outs were made deeper and the walls thicker, to give more protection against the cold. I also saw other inventions. Several "houses" were built of empty beer-boxes filled with earth and set in clay, and one of the smartest dwellings was made up of large brass-ornamented Chinese cupboards, looking quite elegant and imposing.

The soldiers in the advanced trenches fared very differently. The siege parallels, where they were quartered, were some 8 ft. wide, so there was room enough to put their shelters against the wall of the trench and have a footpath along them; but the men were, of course, very cramped, and had little opportunity of walking about, and the different camp arrangements were very difficult to carry out. In addition there was the stench of putrefying corpses. This pervaded everywhere,



BIVOUACS IN A SIEGE PARALLEL



but it was worst in the Panlung forts, after all the heavy fighting and continuous sniping here. The stench was almost intolerable, and one could actually *see* the fluid of the decomposed corpses filtering into the trenches.

Add to this the constant dangers around them. The nearest Russian forts and the Chinese wall were a few hundred yards away, and their outposts were entrenched less than a hundred yards from the captured forts. The sniping went on day and night all the time, and shrapnel and shell were occasionally fired into the trenches, so the soldiers on duty were never at peace, and had to be always on the *qui vive* during the week they stayed there, before being relieved. If they forgot themselves for a moment and showed their heads, they were invariably fired at and often shot dead, as the Russians placed some of their best marksmen up here. Then there were the frequent sorties and counter-attacks of the Russians which I have already mentioned. Night after night it was the same story. We could hear the rattling of musketry commence and rapidly grow stronger and stronger; machine-guns would chime in, and the din would swell to a roar, as the big guns awoke, one after the other, and bellowed forth. The first nights we used to turn out to see what was going on. But we soon gave that up. The fracas was generally over in less than half an hour, shorter time than it took us to make up our minds and get dressed and climb the steep path to our observation post. During the first couple of weeks after the capture of the forts the Japanese casualties here averaged a hundred a day per fort; later they dropped to about twenty or twenty-five, and even less.

The bulk of the army had pitched their camps

in between the foot-hills, behind the approaching saps. The nature of the ground made it everywhere possible to find sheltered places for such a purpose, where the troops could live screened from the view of the enemy in comparative safety, though the Russians occasionally sent shells into places where they thought it likely the Japanese had established encampments. We had some few of them flying about our own camp, and some "humming birds," splinters of shell or shrapnel, struck within a few feet of our tents and were picked up burning hot. But, as I have said, these places were fairly safe, and accidents were comparatively few. The camps were, as a rule, built on the back slopes of some hill, and it had in many cases been necessary to terrace the hill-side from top to bottom to make room for the tents and the shelters. But the Japanese understand this kind of work—have not they laid out half of their own country in terraces? They cut out and build up, and they construct quite decent roads or broad pathways which zigzag along a fairly easy gradient from terrace to terrace right up to the tops of hills which, without these roads, would often be nearly insurmountable. Even the horses were taken up here, and, especially at the headquarters of the 1st Division, it was quite interesting to see them stabled on small balcony-like terraces, holding two or three horses each, nearly at the top of the hill, with their backs to a perpendicular wall cut out in the hill-side, and looking down over a perpendicular precipice into the valley below.

It was, of course, only for the staff officers' horses that such elaborate arrangements were made. All the artillery and commissariat horses were kept in camps which were spread all over

the back country, forming a long semi-circular line from coast to coast. They were, of course, tethered in the open until the weather became very cold, when mat-sheds or dug-outs were constructed for them in most places. The horses were, as a whole, a very poor lot, though some of the batteries had fairly good limber horses; but by far the majority of them were the poorest and most vicious brutes I have seen in any army. Whether their viciousness is caused by their treatment, or the soldiers treat them as they do because they are so vicious, I cannot say. Of all civilized nations the Japanese are, without exception, the poorest horsemen, the word "horsemen" being taken in its widest significance. Not only are they poor riders, their general build making it difficult for them to acquire a good seat, but they do not understand how to work and spare their horses so as to get the maximum of work out of them with the minimum of fatigue. They have no idea of the still more important part, to breed horses, to break them in and to treat them properly. The breed is rotten: narrow-chested, steep-shouldered, leggy, lanky brutes, with poor loins and still poorer hind-quarters; and as to breaking in, I do not think that, with the exception of some few officers' horses, a single one would pass muster at the inspection of any remount-school in Europe. The men have no love nor liking for their horses, they consider them an enemy, a thing to be subdued and kept down. I cannot remember to have seen a single soldier pet his horse or try to make friends with it. The horses are treated harshly, with the obvious result that they become vicious, if not already so by nature.

While on the subject of camps there is, in this

connection, another thing which is worth mentioning. I have already said that the soldiers were daily taken out for drill. Generally it was only for a short time every day, the drill consisting mostly of gymnastic exercises to keep the men fit and in good condition ; but on one occasion for about a week or ten days the plain in front of us looked somewhat like Aldershot on a field-day. Companies were exercised for hours at a stretch, forenoon and afternoon, and were led to make sham attacks on some hill in the neighbourhood, or simply across the fields to a *donga* which had to do service for a Russian trench.

Another thing we remarked at the same time. On the side of the steep hill, under which the camps were pitched, a kind of altar had been built up, adorned with flowers and foliage and decked with rice and cakes and other eatables. Before this altar we saw on two or three different occasions a considerable number of troops drawn up and formed in open squares. Then a kind of religious service took place, with Buddhist priests in their long gold-braided robes performing ceremonies, and then some superior officer stood forth and harangued the troops.

It was long before we could learn what the thing really meant. People were very reticent when we asked them. We thought it some kind of memorial service for those of their comrades who had fallen in front of Port Arthur, and it did not occur to us at all to connect this ceremony with the very pronounced increase of drill activity amongst the troops in our vicinity. But little by little the real significance of these two facts oozed out, and although it has been practically impossible to get all the details, the gist of the story is this :—

During the attacks on one of the enemy's positions, the two regiments detailed for this work were one regiment of the right division and one of the 2nd reserve regiments. The former was in front and made the first assault. They were driven back with heavy losses in spite of the most brilliant dash and bravery, and the 2nd reserve regiment was then ordered to make another attack. Something now happened which is quite inexplicable and certainly without any parallel in the history of the brave Japanese army. The whole regiment—that is, the soldiers of the regiment—refused to a man to go forward to what seemed wholesale destruction. The major who on this occasion was in command went forward, exposing himself to the Russian bullets, waving his sword and calling upon the men to follow him; but not a man stirred. The major was instantly shot dead, and after a while, whether from remorse or for other reasons, the men went forward and made the attack as ordered. The assault failed, and they had to withdraw with considerable losses.

This was, as will be readily understood, a most disgraceful act, and so absolutely contrary to the spirit of Japanese traditions, that it fairly nonplussed the rest of the army. They did not understand it, and did not quite know how to treat such conduct. The regiment was sent back from the fighting lines for a week or longer, during which time they were punished by this heavy drill and forced marches and attacks up steep hill-sides at the double in the blazing hot sun, and it was these same troops which were drawn up in front of the altar, on the hill-side, to attend services in memory of their brave major, and afterwards to be lectured by a superior officer

on their duties, and reprimanded for their disgraceful conduct.

After a while the regiment went back to the front again; of course, all the troops knew of what had happened, and I expect they had a bad time of it. As a matter of fact, when later a division was ordered up to reinforce the troops at Liaoyang, their colonel applied for his regiment to form part of this force, and his application was granted. Whether the regiment has re-vindicated its honour, and retrieved its prestige on another theatre of operations, I do not know. I hasten to add that the officers of the regiment had no share in this deplorable affair, and that no blame can be attached to them.

I should hardly have mentioned the incident at all, if it had not been for a certain aspect of the affair to which I attach the greatest importance, and which leads to another story; but to that I shall return in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER XII

SIGNAL AND COMMISSARIAT SERVICE

IT was not only the teeming life and the animated scenes which gave such a different aspect to the country occupied by the besieging army. The whole formation of the ground was changed under the busy hands of the engineering troops. A network of roads was built, not only on the plains, connecting the different camps with each other and with General Nogi's headquarters, the commissariat depôts, and the railway station, but also up the steep hill-sides to the artillery positions and over the passes and lower ridges of Fenghoangshan range to the troops at the front. About fifty kilometres of Decauville railways were laid, and hundreds of miles of telegraph and telephone wires stretched all over the country. Camps and hospitals, cemeteries and crematoriums, workshops and signal stations, trenches and bomb-proofs were built, hills were cut out in terraces, while in the villages many of the houses had been destroyed by fire or shells, others occupied by troops, others again changed to storehouses, or stables, or hospitals, so that when the natives who fled from their homes returned, they would have some difficulty in recognizing the old place.

Following the telegraph or telephone wires,

which sometimes were stretched between light, strong bamboo poles, sometimes laid in cables on the ground, one would find that, at the front, most of them converged upon the divisional headquarters, connecting them with all their regiments, battalions and batteries, even with their advanced posts, and, later, with the sap-heads. At the rear the wires that from all directions led into General Nogi's headquarters were, as might be expected, very numerous. But the point to which by far the greatest number of wires converged was the high hill, not far from our camp, where General Tejima, commander of the siege artillery, had pitched his tent. To this position no less than 130 miles of telephone wires were leading, and from his post here the General could personally supervise and direct the whole bombardment. Although, under ordinary circumstances, he left his battery commanders a fairly free hand, only limiting their number of shots for each day and generally assigning to them which of the enemy's positions to take under fire, he could at any time, especially during the bigger attacks, personally interfere and take over the leading of the whole service of the big guns and mortars in the siege park.

General Tejima had nothing to do with the field batteries, which all were under the command of the chief of the independent artillery brigade. These batteries played a much less prominent *rôle* than the big guns; though during attacks they did good service with their shrapnel fire. The machine guns, numbering seventy-two, twenty-four per division, were under the direct orders of the divisional commanders.

Practically the whole Japanese signal service was carried out by telephone, and though I was

told that this mode of communication has not been quite satisfactory at the other theatres of operations, the system, in front of Port Arthur, has worked without a hitch, greatly benefiting the siege operations. By putting every battery along their whole front in telephonic communication with the general superintendent, the Japanese were enabled to establish a co-operation between the batteries, a unity in the leading which has been of the greatest importance for a methodical service.

Other ways of signalling, common in European armies, e.g., by flags, electric lights, heliographs, &c., have been little if at all used by the Japanese before Port Arthur. Even from their balloon, which during the first week of the siege was used daily for exploring the enemy's positions, but which later was sent up only on rare occasions, communication was established by telephone. The only other means of signalling which I saw employed was during bayonet attacks, when the Japanese shrapnel fire was kept up until the last moment, and when the attacking party, at least on one occasion, carried with them a large white flag, with which they signalled back to the batteries. To this, however, I shall refer in a subsequent chapter, in connection with the September attacks. Later in the siege, when the Japanese had carried their saps close up to the fortifications, and especially during the bigger assaults, when, at night, it was practically impossible to ascertain from the battery positions how far the infantry had advanced, the Japanese used to mark their advanced positions by white lights, and signal to the batteries to direct their fire against certain positions by means of red Bengal fires.

Before I resume my tale of the actual events of

the siege, there is one branch of the service which I have not, so far, had an opportunity of mentioning, but which, being of the greatest importance to the well-being of the army, deserves a few words of explanation—I mean the commissariat and transport service. The Japanese are in this respect better off than most other armies, the staple food of the soldiers being rice, which is easy to pack and handle, and which contains but little water in comparison with other food stuffs, whereby the transport of much superfluous weight is avoided.

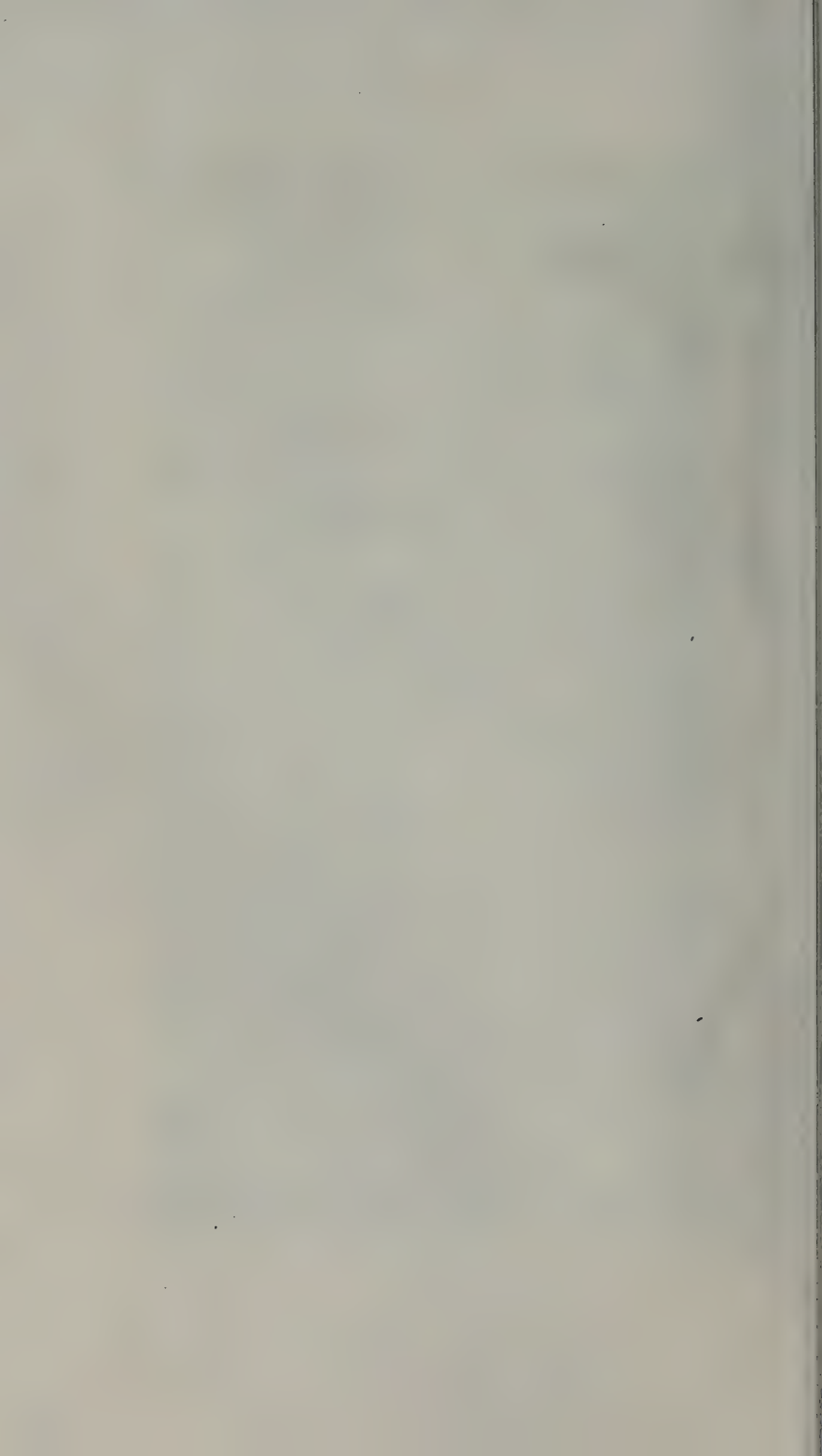
It is, however, a mistake to think, as many do, that the Japanese soldiers live practically exclusively on rice. They do in times of peace, but during a campaign they are better fed; their daily rations consist of 2 lbs. of rice, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of wheat, 1 lb. of fresh vegetables, and 4 oz. of tinned provisions (meat, pickles, or vegetables). The canned meat is very good, packed in handy little tins, holding one day's provisions; the fresh vegetables consist mostly of Chinese cabbages, with also, in the summer, turnips, radishes, and cucumbers. In addition to this the soldiers receive every other day $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of fresh meat, and, twice weekly, saké, cigarettes, sweet cakes, sugar, and tea are served out to them.

Their daily pay is 6 sen ($1\frac{1}{2}$ d.), which they generally spend in cigarettes, getting ten for their 6 sen. The emergency rations consist of canned meat and some very excellent biscuits.

The Japanese troops are well clad. In summer time they wear khaki uniforms of nearly the same fabric as in use in the British army; woollen socks, strong lace-up boots, and khaki or white duck leggings, or, in some cases lately, putties. During the winter months they wear dark blue



COOKING THE RICE



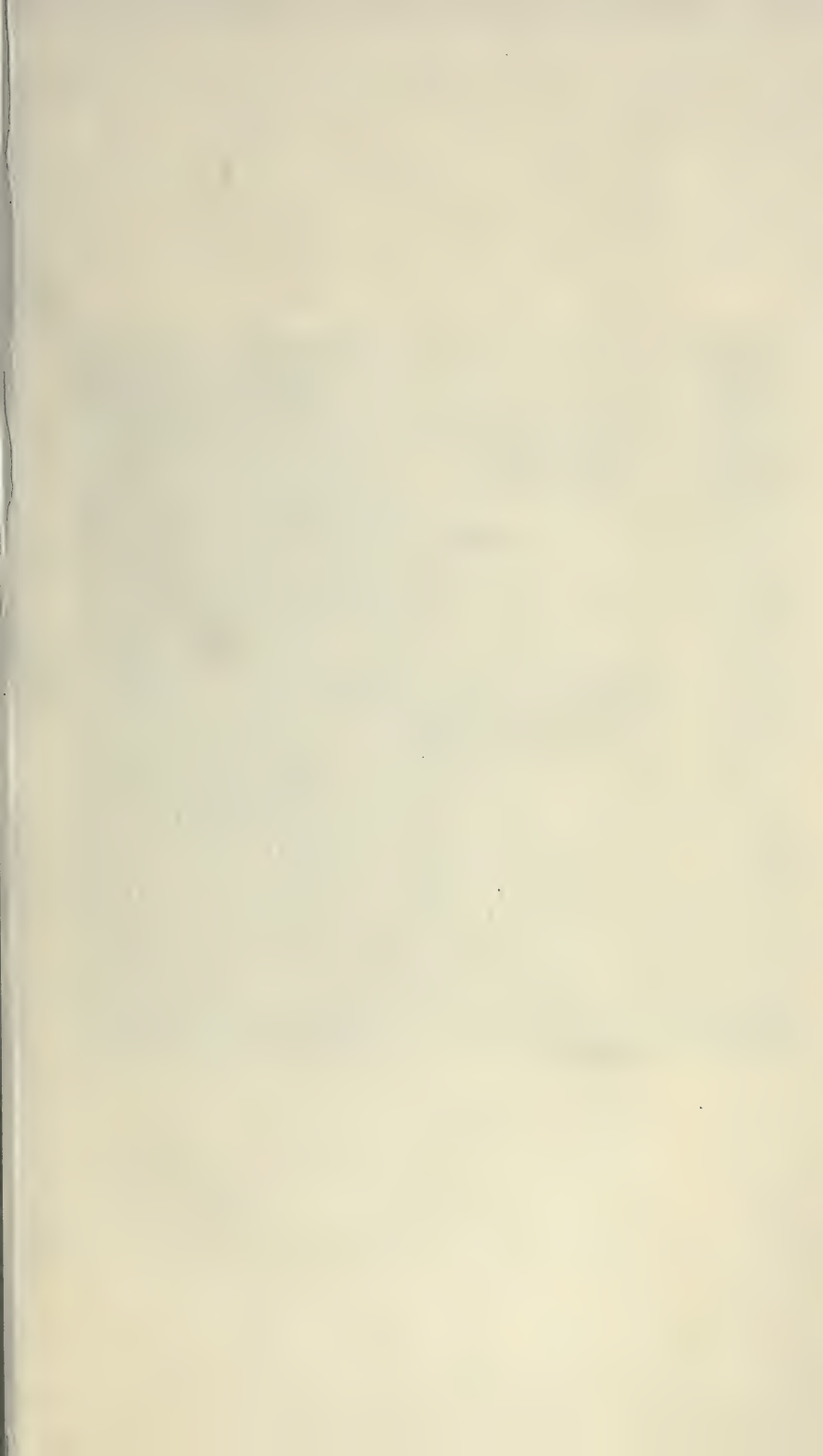
uniforms of much the same pattern and style as the German army. The cap is the same summer and winter, somewhat like the German "Mütze," with a broad yellow band and a metal star in front. In cold weather they protect their heads with a capuchon of soft wool over their caps, of exactly the same shape and stuff as the Russian soldiers' "bashlihk." All the army except the cavalry wears the same pattern uniform, only the colour of the collars and trouser-stripes being different for the various arms; red for the infantry, yellow for artillery, and maroon for the engineers, with blue for the commissariat, and dark green for the ambulance corps. The cavalry uniform is of flaming red, with yellow cords and light green braid—outrageously gaudy.

Experiences from the war have proved how unsuitable dark uniforms are; the men can be seen quite plainly a long distance away, and it is unquestionable that this much contributed to make their losses so heavy. The men had a full understanding of this, and when on duty in the advanced lines it was not an uncommon thing to see them with their khaki tunics drawn over the dark uniform, or with the grey-lined tunics turned inside out; frequently they wore a kind of waistcoat made of goat-skin with the hair out. I have even seen them make a kind of overall out of common bags. On one occasion, which I will mention later, the soldiers, before an attack, drew their grey underwear—hoods, jerseys, and drawers—over their dark uniforms, in order to be less conspicuous. Undoubtedly the experiences from the war will lead to a complete discarding of their present winter uniforms, and khaki-coloured woollen stuff will be substituted, as has already been the case with the overcoats. These are

most excellent, of a very soft, light, and very warm woollen stuff, with a collar of goat-skin to protect the neck and ears. The winter underwear is also very good, and consists of thick, warm, machine-knitted woollen hoods (to wear under the cap), singlets, and drawers, all of first-rate material; and with the great-coats and three blankets per man, the soldiers are fairly snug and comfortable even in the coldest nights.

With full command of the sea, and with the railway leading right up to the rear of the Japanese lines, the transport service in front of Port Arthur was made comparatively easy, the base of supplies being Dalny, where the Quartermaster-General had established his headquarters. During the first part of the campaign, before the railway was captured and the gauge altered to suit the Japanese rolling-stock, all the transport had to go by road, for the most part being forwarded in carts, but also partly carried by coolies.

A large number of Chinese carts found after the capture of Kinchow and Dalny proved of the greatest service to the Japanese. These carts are heavy and clumsy, but very strong, and the only kind of vehicle that can carry any weight over Chinese "roads"—simple tracks over the country, ankle-deep in mud during the rainy season, frequently becoming transformed into real water-courses, full of round stones and boulders in dry weather, and leading up and down hill without any attempt to take advantage of the natural formation of the ground. The light one-horse Japanese carts, constructed after the model of an Indian army cart, would have been of little use on such roads for transporting the food and warlike stores of a large army over any consider-





A JAPANESE COMMISSARIAT CART

able distance. The presence of an unlimited number of Chinese coolies to carry burdens and undertake the loading and unloading of ships, railway trucks, and carts, made it possible for the Japanese to do away with a large number of army coolies and camp-followers, whom they made better use of as soldiers in the fighting lines.

To facilitate the forwarding of ammunition, provisions, and other supplies, the roads were divided into sections, and an *étape* station established for each, under an officer's command. This organization was retained throughout the siege; and a small guard was left at each of the *étape* stations, even after the railway had taken over the transport, so that the traffic by road could be resumed at a moment's notice if the railway should break down or be destroyed by the enemy. For the 11th Division, with headquarters not far from the eastern sea-shore, the transport by road was continued to the end of the siege, supplies being taken by ships direct from Japan to Shao-pingtou Bay, and from there carted to the divisional *depôt*.

In Dalny there were two forwarding departments, one for ammunition and arms, and one for provisions, clothing, fodder, &c. A colonel was in command at the main *depôt* at Changling, the railway terminus, where extensive sidings had been laid and considerable cuttings and fillings carried out. He was also in charge of the transport from the railway station to the divisional *depôts*, mostly done by the small Japanese transport carts, though partly also by Chinese carts.

The divisional *depôts* were established in a conveniently situated village, where many roads converged, at the rear of each of the divisions, and from them the supplies were obtained for

each administrative unit, and taken to the different camps on horseback. Each unit—that is, each battalion of infantry, each battery, squadron, and company of artillery, cavalry, and engineers respectively—had for this service sixty-five men and about forty horses.

The peculiar conditions at the theatre of war of a large native population willing and capable of doing coolie work for the invading armies, made the organization of the transport service—excellent though it was—so wholly different from what would be necessary during a European war, that no lessons of any real value to our army can be derived from it. The same is, for obvious reasons, the case with their commissariat. The only debatable point is whether it would not be worth a trial to make rice, which is both nourishing and easy to pack and handle, a more prominent item of our soldiers' rations. This I humbly submit to men who are interested in these questions.

CHAPTER XIII

SEPTEMBER

GENERAL NOGI had bowed to the necessity of opening a siege proper before Port Arthur. It was evident that in adopting this measure not only his tactics but his whole plan of campaign would have to be completely altered. During an assault he could advance with a narrow front, taking little notice of the forts, and simply leaving a sufficient force to grapple with the nearest of them, while the main body pushed on regardless of the losses which these same forts might still be able to inflict. It was the sudden force, the powerful shock, the surprise, the consternation, the fury of the onslaught which should win him the day.

In regular siege operations, on the other hand, there would be no question of surprises and sudden rushes ; it would not do to leave defences behind in the possession of the Russians from where his saps could be taken under enfilading fire ; it would not do to advance with a narrow front, leaving the enemy's forts so close to his line of advance that his troops might be cut off by sudden counter-attacks or have their saps ruined by shell fire. Everything must be done methodically, every outwork be taken in its turn, before any operations were commenced against the permanent forts. The advance must go on, over a

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broad front, and step by step, without neglecting the least of the defence works, without stopping or hesitating before the most formidable obstacles.

So long as it had been a question of taking Port Arthur by direct assault, it was undoubtedly, as I have tried to make clear, the best plan to strike at the Panlung forts and Wantai. The very vigorous resistance which the Japanese had met with here made it less certain that this was the best point for breaking through during a regular siege; it might be more worth while to make attempts in other directions. In any case, if the eastern section of fortifications was to remain the principal tactical object, it would be necessary to direct the attack against all of those forts which could take a more effective part in the defence of this zone. General Nogi therefore decided to open up saps against all the *enceinte* forts along the northern front of the section, from Sungshuh to East Kikuan, both inclusive. Before any sapping operations could be commenced against the western flank of these positions, it was, however, necessary to drive the Russians out from their advanced positions in the Shuishi valley which barred the way against an advance on Sungshuh, Erhlung, and Hachimaki-Yama. The strongest of these advance works were Lungyen redoubt and the Shuishi lunettes.

In order to occupy the attention of the enemy in other directions, and so prevent him from massing the bulk of his forces in the eastern section, and undoubtedly also in order to ascertain if an advance along either the Siuchiatus valley or the western plateau were easier routes than the first chosen, General Nogi decided to attack the two positions on the Metre range which in either of

these alternatives must be his first objectives (the 180 and 203 Metre Hill). Saps were accordingly opened up towards the Panlung forts, to put them in safe communication with the base; against North Kikuan; and a little later against East Kikuan forts; against Lungyen redoubt; the Shuishi lunettes, and the positions on the Metre range.

During the advance against North Kikuan the Japanese met with a vigorous and stubborn resistance, and it was not till the end of October that they were able to bring their saps sufficiently near to the fort to make an attack, so that during the month of September the more active operations of the Japanese had to be confined to attacks on the above-mentioned semi-permanent works in the Shuishi Valley and on the Metre range.

Three weeks elapsed before the sapping against these positions was so advanced that General Nogi deemed it advisable to attack them. On September 18th we were summoned to his headquarters, where we met Major Yamaoka of his staff, who told us that the attack would take place on the following day, explained to us what ways and means would be adopted for carrying the works, and advised us to go to the headquarters of the 1st Division, where we would have a good view of the operations. He said that the attack on Lungyen redoubt would be made by troops of the 9th Division, while the other positions would be stormed by regiments of the 1st Division and the 1st independent brigade. Simultaneously demonstrations would be made against the whole Russian front line.

On the following day, when we arrived at the headquarters of the 1st Division, and had taken

our places in trenches on the hill assigned to us, the Japanese guns had already opened up against the enemy's positions, but as yet not very vigorously. The real bombardment commenced about two o'clock in the afternoon, so we had plenty of time to study the field of operations, of which we had a most excellent view.

Right in front of us rose the heavy bulk of 180 Metre Hill, with its double row of trenches all round its large plateau. A little further to the south-west, separated from 180 Metre Hill by a sudden dip in the mountain range, the tall, steep, double-peaked 203 Metre Hill loomed up, also with a double crown of trenches. To our right we had 174 Metre Hill, which the Japanese had captured on August 20th. Separated from the hills in front of us by a narrow valley, it rose up, sloping gently at first, but gradually getting steeper, until it lifted its head proudly and nearly perpendicularly in the air. To our left, deep down below us, the broad valley of Shuishi stretched its green fields far out to the east, until it was met and stopped by the dark towering masses of Takushan. In the centre of the valley, surrounded by fertile plains, lay the large Shuishi village, looking, at a distance, peaceful and placid under the shadows of old willow and mulberry trees. Seen through our glasses, the suggestion of peacefulness vanished. The roofless houses, deserted streets, and broken-down or blackened walls, told another story—of fire and flames, of bursting shells and swift-flying bullets, of fierce encounters of angry men, of blood and death, and dire distress. To the east of the village and to the south were the redoubt and the lunettes about to be attacked. They were not easy to discover at first, lying half buried, with only the top of the

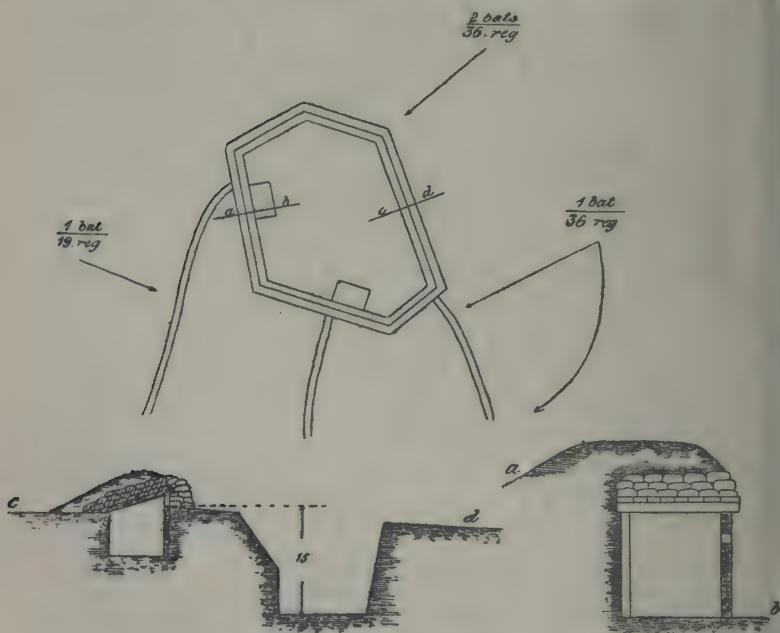
low walls showing above the sea of green meadow-fields around them, but the black zigzag lines of Japanese trenches, and the smoke and dust of bursting shells, showed us clearly enough where we must look in order to see and follow the impending struggle.

Meanwhile the Japanese batteries commenced to open up in full earnest. Right under us, deep down in a flat stretch of country, behind a nearly imperceptible wave in the undulating ground, were four field batteries. Further back, not far away from us, in positions so well chosen that not even we could locate them—let alone the Russians—though we heard the zish of their shells as they sped past us, were other batteries with guns of larger calibre. And further to the north and east, along the Fenghoangshan range and foothills, siege guns, mortars, and howitzers of all descriptions and sizes were sending out their messages of death and devastation, and hour after hour we watched the small clouds of dust and smoke leaping forth in and around the defences, and noted how the breastworks in many places slowly crumbled under the incessant heavy blows, until the infantry began to move and the artillery changed shell fire for shrapnel.

The attacks against the four positions took place simultaneously, but quite independently, so, to give an idea of the different operations, it will be necessary to treat each separately.

The Lungyen (Dragon's Eye) Redoubt, also called the Red Redoubt, is situated on a low hill, some four or five hundred yards to the east of Shuishi village. It is a small but strong semi-permanent work, surrounded by a moat. The breastworks were built of earth and sandbags, and the infantry trenches were made bomb-proof

by a roof of timber and sandbags (section c-d). It was armed with machine guns and three field pieces. In the interior of the fort were two caponiers, built of 14-in. square timber, and provided with loopholes for rifles and machine guns (section a-b). From the rear of the redoubt three trenches led back to other advanced defences in



THE LUNGYEN REDOUBT.

front of Erhlung fort, near the railway line. These trenches were permanent constructions, strongly built, and covered with bomb-proof roofs over their whole extension. They were held by two companies of infantry. The garrison of the fort itself likewise consisted of two companies.

From their base the Japanese were able to advance most of the way through a donga which,

in a direction from north to south, leads past the redoubt at a distance of some 500 yards, and in which they were perfectly sheltered. Making this natural parallel their base of operations, they had advanced through ordinary saps up to about fifty yards from the fort, where a last parallel had been constructed, and in this the attacking force was drawn up, awaiting orders to advance.

The task of capturing the redoubt had been entrusted to the right brigade of the central division. The brigadier-general decided to make his main attack against the north-east angle of the fort with two battalions, while the connecting trenches should simultaneously be attacked by one battalion from east and one from west, so that the garrison of the fort would be cut off from retreat. Two battalions were kept in reserve.

The first attack was made at about 5 p.m. on September 19th. The battalion which attacked the western connecting trench had to advance over an open space of some 150 yards, while the two other forces had only to rush a distance of some forty or fifty yards to reach the moat. The western column advanced with the greatest circumspection. The country around Port Arthur is so broken, or at least so undulating, that almost everywhere there is dead ground, where an advancing force can find some shelter and rally for a last run. The Japanese knew from experience what it would mean to advance against a Russian firing-line at close range, and they did not want to take more risks than necessary, so here as elsewhere they sent scouts to explore the ground. Two men were sent ahead, one after the other. Creeping on their stomachs, they pushed a kind of shield in front of them, made of two pieces of

1½ in. planks joined together in the shape of a roof at an angle of about sixty degrees, the outer sides covered with very thin sheet iron ($\frac{1}{16}$ in.), in the ridge a square opening was cut for the rifle. It was the first time these shields were used. They did not prove very successful, being heavy and clumsy; and the enemy's bullets cut through them like butter. The first man was shot before achieving anything; but the other had better luck. He soon discarded his shield, and, creeping forwards with the greatest circumspection, succeeded in reaching some dead ground about sixty or seventy yards from the moat, and from there he signalled back to his comrades that he had found a safe place. Then he crept on, but was instantly shot dead on venturing out from his shelter. After this experience, the triangular wooden shields were abandoned, and on similar occasions the steel shields which I have described in a former chapter were employed. However, the desired information had been obtained, and the battalion commander despatched half a company to the dead ground, which they reached at a run; then the other half of the company followed. From this fairly safe place, after regaining breath, they made a rush against the trench, but were met by so furious a fire from rifles and machine-guns, that men dropped like ninepins, and the remainder had to scurry back to shelter. Simultaneously, attacks were made against the north-east corner of the fort and the eastern trench, but at both places the rush was broken at its outset by the enemy's terrible fire, not a man getting even so far as the moat. In the dusk of the evening another rush was made, but met the same fate.

Meanwhile the Japanese batteries had poured a

tremendous fire over the fort, concentrating all their shell-fire on the north-eastern angle of the redoubt, where they succeeded in making a breach and to a large extent filled the moat. Before and during the attacks they sent hundreds upon hundreds of shrapnel over the fort and the trenches, but against the defenders behind the loop-holed sand-bag walls the bombardment was of slight effect, neither dislodging the Russians nor stopping their fire. At night two determined assaults were again made, and, though the first was beaten back, the besiegers succeeded at the second rush in over-running the moat, partly filled with the earth from the breach, and gained the inside of the fort. The Russians met them with a hot fire from the caponiers, and engaged the invaders in a ferocious hand-to-hand fight. The Japanese carried with them dynamite hand grenades, and the powder-filled bamboo poles which I have mentioned in a former chapter. They smashed the caponiers, and set them on fire. After a fierce tussle, lasting for hours, the Russians were driven out of the fort at about 4.30 in the morning of the 20th. The night attacks on the connecting trenches had utterly failed, so the plan of the Japanese to cut off the retreat of the garrison was frustrated, and the Russians withdrew in safety to their defence works in front of the railway line. As the redoubt would be untenable for the Japanese under the heavy fire which could be poured on it from Antzeshan, Itzeshan, Erhlung, and other positions, they set fire to the fort, which subsequently remained unoccupied except for an occasional visit by a venturesome correspondent. The connecting bomb-proof trenches were also destroyed; it would be too risky to leave the Russians such an excellent means of communication for their

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counter-attacks against the Japanese saps towards Erhlung and Sungshuh forts.

The attacks on the Shuishi lunettes began at five o'clock in the afternoon of the 19th. These lunettes were built on a low eminence in the valley. Four in number, they were situated in the corners of a large, irregular quadrangle and connected by trenches. They were all earthworks,



THE SHUISHI LUNETTES.

open at the gorge, and provided with bomb-proof trenches, similar to those of the Red Redoubt. The strongest of the lunettes was the north-western (B), which was armed with one field-gun, two quick-firers, and three machine guns. Of the others, the one which the Japanese called "A" had one quick-firing gun and three machine guns, and "C" one field gun and two mortars, while "D" was without guns, being held only by infantry. The garrison of the four lunettes numbered about 1,000 men.

The Japanese had brought their saps to about fifty yards from the two northern lunettes, and against these the attacks were directed, the first taking place in the afternoon and two more during the night. There was a small moat in front of the "B" lunette, and the slopes of the breastworks were very steep. The attacking force, as they made their rush from their siege parallel up to the moat, were met with a heavy fire, which struck down many. In the moat a standing fight ensued, mostly with hand grenades, which were freely used by both sides; but the attackers were, of course, in a difficult position for this kind of game and suffered greatly. The few men who reached the parapet were instantly shot down, and the Japanese had to retire each time with considerable losses. For an hour before the first attack and later, during the night attacks, the Japanese poured a tremendous shrapnel fire into the four lunettes and the connecting trenches, and for the rest of the time kept them under a constant shell fire. From early morning on the 20th shrapnel fire commenced again; the whole attacking force, five battalions, was concentrated on the strong "B" lunette, and a last powerful rush made. Carrying scaling ladders with them, they swarmed up over the breastworks and into the fort, where a short, sharp hand-to-hand fight ensued. The Russians were overpowered, and retired through the trenches leading back to the "A" lunette; but the Japanese followed on their heels and entered the lunette simultaneously with the Russians. The garrison here, demoralized by the long, heavy bombardment, by the loss of their strongest lunette, and overwhelmed with confusion and consternation as friends and foes came tumbling pell-mell into their defence works,

did not put up much of a fight, but gave up the position and fled. The two other lunettes also were evacuated by the Russians without serious resistance, and by ten o'clock in the morning the whole position was in the hands of the Japanese.

Of the two hills on the Metre Range which the Japanese intended to attack, the 203 Metre Hill was infinitely the stronger, as well from nature's hand as from the defence works which had been built to enhance its natural advantages. The 180 Metre Hill, which the Japanese call Namaoka-yama, is a large flat-topped ridge with rather steep, bulging sides, which in many places form dead ground. Its large, level plateau was surrounded by a double row of trenches, with no inner forts or entrenchments to support them, but a battery position for two heavy guns and a couple of machine-guns. The trenches were only partly made bomb-proof, and it was, on the whole, evident that the Russians did not attach any very great importance to this position, which was completely dominated by the neighbouring hill, and therefore could not be of much use to the Japanese so long as 203 Metre Hill remained in the possession of the Russians.

The sketch will give an idea of how the positions looked from the hill where we were seated. The nearest, Takasaki Hill, had been captured by the Japanese about the middle of August, the central is 180 Metre Hill, and the further, double-peaked hill, is 203 Metre Hill. As will be seen, there are on the north-western (nearest) slopes of 180 Metre Hill two shallow ravines which lead from the foot of the hill nearly up to the lower Russian trench line. As the ground round Namaoka-yama is very hard and the advance for the greater part of the way could be made under perfect shelter, the

Japanese did no sapping against this position. The rear slopes of Takasaki-yama formed a better base for an attack than any siege parallel, and the above-mentioned ravines formed natural approaches which no pioneers could have made better.

Here, as everywhere, the artillery opened the attack. The hill was exposed to furious shelling for fourteen hours, and then, from five o'clock in the afternoon, to a very heavy shrapnel fire. Under cover of this the 1st regiment, detailed for the attack, made its first advance. From their position on Takasaki Hill a small force, sending ground scouts ahead, dashed down the slopes and



THE METRE RANGE.

gained the nearest ravine without any losses. Other small forces followed, and in about an hour quite a considerable force, probably a battalion, was assembled in the ravine, which they occupied from the foot of the hill right up to some dead ground close under the lower trenches. Another battalion of the regiment was in the same way sent across to the next ravine. Here the open ground which they had to cover was somewhat further, and swept by Russian rifle fire, so the advance had to be made still more cautiously. To send across even small forces at a time was too great a risk, so the men went singly and doubled across the open space at top speed. It was

exciting to watch this part of the advance, as man after man started out on this short race where the stakes were life and death. It kept us breathless, spell-bound—with something of the old-time lust of blood, which we thought ages of civilization had obliterated, stirring somewhere down in the deep abysses of our souls; something akin to the feelings with which the Romans watched a gladiator fight in the arena. As the men dashed across the open space, bullets flew thick about their ears, and we could see small puffs of dust spring up where the bullets struck the ground all around them.

The first three men reached their goal safely. The fourth, an officer, brandishing his sword—they always will brandish their swords, these fellows—set out, not in a straight line like his predecessors, but running zigzag-wise, probably to make the aim more difficult to the Russians; but this proved fatal; it made his stay in the perilous zone so many seconds longer. He was struck by a bullet, and, if not killed on the spot, he certainly was a dead man a few moments later; for Russian bullets were flying thick about the place where he fell, until there could be no doubt about his fate. But the race, of course, went on unheedingly, and though several men shared the lot of the officer, the percentage who lost their stake in the race was comparatively small, and the force assembling in the ravine rapidly grew in numbers until at least two companies were drawn up there.

By about 6.30 in the afternoon the whole attacking force was across the danger zone and safely drawn up in the ravines, but no assault was attempted until long after dark. Down behind these bulky, massive hills no searchlight could

reach, and under the circumstances the Japanese preferred to wait until darkness made the Russian fire less accurate and less deadly. But even with the assistance of night the Japanese failed to reach their goal. They climbed over the first trench lines and drove out the few Russians here without difficulty, but they were stopped by the ubiquitous wire entanglements and forced to withdraw under a withering fire from the upper trenches. Their sappers went to work and succeeded in cutting an opening through the wires; the rest of the troops spent the night in a bitterly cold north wind, clad only in their thin khaki suits, without overcoats, and we could see them sitting there during nearly the whole of the next day awaiting orders for another advance.

But while the infantry had thus a quiet day for the best part of the 20th, the artillery were busier than ever. From early dawn the batteries opened fire and showered a rain of shells over both the Russian positions, continuing until about noon, when they commenced firing shrapnel. This lasted for many hours, and never, before or since, have I witnessed anything to equal it. Over the whole extension of the trenches shrapnel burst incessantly, and we could actually follow the irregular trench lines reflected, as it were, in a double line of the small white clouds above them, so accurate was the Japanese firing, and with such amazing precision did their fuses burn.

At five o'clock in the afternoon the infantry began to move, and soon reached the upper trenches through the gap in the wire entanglements. The terrible shrapnel fire had evidently done its work well, for comparatively few men were shot down during the advance up the steep slopes. The trenches were reached and the

nearest part carried in a very short time ; but the Russians still put up a good fight. Silhouetted on the top of the trenches as the combatants were, we could easily follow the hard-contested hand-to-hand fight. Through our glasses we could plainly see every thrust parried, every blow that struck home—we could see how with bayonets and swords, stones and clubbed rifles, both sides strove furiously for the mastery—until the garrison was overpowered and the hill in the hands of the Japanese. The fight, from the first move until the finish, had not lasted more than half an hour. But the Japanese were not able to remain on the hill. A heavy artillery fire from Antzeshan and Itzeshan made the position on the plateau untenable, and they had to retire again to the trenches below, and not until many weeks later did the Japanese pioneers succeed in strengthening the defences sufficiently for the place to be of any use.

At 203 Metre Hill the fighting was far more severe. In itself the position is much stronger, and the defence works which the Russians had built, though of a semi-permanent character, were of immense strength. Months later, about the end of November and the beginning of December, some of the most tenacious and fiercest fighting during the siege took place here, and the strength of the position was submitted to a test which fully demonstrated the ability of the Russian engineers responsible for the planning and building of the defences. The fighting which took place here from the 19th to the 22nd of September, though fierce enough at times, was infinitely tamer than the November-December encounters, and from a tactical point of view of no particular interest, so that I shall content

myself with stating that the attacks on the hill were made by the 15th and the 16th regiments of the 2nd reserve, and that the Japanese succeeded in carrying part of the hill, but were unable to push their attack right home, and, after two days' desperate fighting, were driven out again with considerable losses. The operations were stopped at about six o'clock in the afternoon of September 22nd, and no further attempts were made to capture the position till a long time after.

The Japanese casualties during these fights had been: at the Lungyen redoubt about 1,200; at the Shuishi lunettes about 400; at 180 Metre Hill about 400; and at 203 Metre Hill about 2,000 killed and wounded. Amongst the killed was Major-General Yamamoto, commander of the 1st brigade.

CHAPTER XIV

WAYS AND MEANS

ALTHOUGH the September attacks were of comparatively minor importance and on a comparatively small scale, when seen in connection with the August and the later general attacks, there are certain aspects of the fighting to which interest attaches from a tactical point of view.

The first thing to strike an observer was the perfect co-operation between the artillery and the infantry of the Japanese army. Not only did the artillery, by its fire, prepare the way for the attacking infantry and break the edge of the defenders' power of resistance, but they actually took part in the assault itself. We saw this best at the attack on 180 Metre Hill. The force which had been drawn up in the ravines had, as I have related in the preceding chapter, to remain there immovable for the best part of the night of the 19th and all through the following day, until about five o'clock in the afternoon, before starting out for the final assault.

The first sign that a move was on foot was the unfurling of a large white flag. Round this the soldiers were drawn up, and when the word was given for the advance, and the attacking force started climbing the hill, this big flag was carried with them, following close on their heels.

The shrapnel fire, which at the outset of the rush had been terrific, never slackened for a moment either when the attackers reached the upper trenches or when they gained the plateau itself; ay, not even when the men were fighting hand to hand, attackers and defenders mixed up in the wildest *mêlée*. The Japanese shrapnel burst right over the heads of their own men, sweeping the whole plateau where supports were coming up or where the Russians retired, and it looked to us as if some of them burst right in amongst the clusters of men fighting hand to hand. A Russian officer who took part in this fight told me that this really was the case, and that several Japanese were killed by their own fire. And now we understood what the object of the big white flag was; it was carried as a signal to the batteries where to direct their fire, so as to have the powerful assistance of the artillery to the very end.

The Japanese batteries were wonderfully well served during these attacks. The precision of their fire and the excellence of their material, especially the accuracy and uniformity of their time fuses, was unsurpassable. And the Japanese were not stingy with their ammunition; they must have hurled thousands upon thousands of shells and shrapnel at the positions during these days; but I think it is doubtful if they derived the benefit they had expected from the heavy artillery fire. At Lungyen redoubt it certainly was of great service to them in opening a breach in the ramparts and partly filling the moat, and during the assault on 180 Metre Hill the shrapnel fire was of the greatest assistance; but it must be remembered that at the latter position the fighting took place in and about trenches of a

more primitive description, without much in the way of bomb-proofs, so that the Russians, particularly during the latter portions of the fight, were practically unprotected against the shrapnel bullets. In the other positions, where the defenders were sheltered behind loopholed sand-bag walls and under cover of bomb-proofs, even the heaviest shell or shrapnel fire proved quite unable to dislodge them or to make their fire on the attacking party less deadly. To this the many repulsed attacks bore witness. But the tremendous effect of these same shrapnel when directed against troops in the open was demonstrated to us during these attacks, and it was the Russians who brought home the lesson most forcibly to us—and to the Japanese.

On the morning of September 20th, at about ten o'clock, after the night attack on 180 Metre Hill had been repulsed, the Japanese sent a force of the 15th regiment to attack the south-western part of this position. The attacking force were drawn up behind the crest of one of the foot-hills of 174 Metre Hill, and from there they had to cross an open space and dash down a slope (altogether a distance of some 300 yards) to a donga where they would be under perfect cover.* There was no need to send ground scouts ahead this time; the most cursory glance at the field they had to cross convinced them that no cover was possible against the fire from the opposite hills. They must trust to speed and good luck, and hope that the withering shrapnel fire which at this moment was being poured over the enemy's positions would make the defenders' aim less accurate.

* The lower part of the slope and the donga are shown in the sketch, page 157, on the right-hand side.

A party of some fifty or sixty men started out at a run to try to reach the donga. Spreading out over the whole field, they set out at top speed down the slope. No sooner had the first men started than shrapnel burst amongst them, striking down some, whilst others got through unhurt and continued the deadly race. From other parts of the crest more men were starting out, but the Russians had shrapnel everywhere, singling them out on the crest and on the slopes. Quite a number of men had reached to about fifty yards from the donga, converging from all sides, when a large-calibre shrapnel was fired, flinging hundreds of bullets in amongst them, and killing every man in the little cluster. In front of the group an officer was running, closely followed by one of his men. Though the shrapnel seemed to burst right in front of him, he succeeded, as by a miracle, in getting through unhurt, and was but a few paces away from the donga, when another shrapnel burst and struck him and his follower down. The officer tottered forwards, reeling like a drunken man, then fell lifeless, his arms outstretched over the very edge of the donga—the donga that would have meant life and safety to him if it had been only ten paces nearer.

Of the whole force not a mother's son escaped. Every man was killed. Although the sight was somewhat gruesome, the Russian gun-practice was so excellent that it could not but warm an old artilleryman's heart. The whole affair did not last much more than a minute; the men were running at the top of their speed and were spread out over a considerable surface, and those who know the difficulty of changing sights and time fuses and aiming guns within the space of a

very few seconds, especially when under heavy fire from the enemy, will understand and appreciate the excellence of the Russian gunners' practice and feel strengthened in their faith in the importance of the artillery's *rôle* in a modern battle.

Another thing noteworthy as showing a trait in the Japanese character, which during the whole campaign here became more and more apparent, was their almost incredible optimism in the appreciation of the strength and effectiveness of their own offensive means as compared with the defensive means of the enemy, which in this case was shown by the unpreparedness, or rather the incompleteness, of their preparations for the attacks. In no place had they carried their saps nearer to the enemy's works than some fifty yards, so that the last rush had to be made across an open space, exposed to a terrible fire at close range. This accounts for the severe losses which the Russians everywhere were able to inflict on them before being driven out.

The Japanese soldier did not like this kind of underground warfare. It was too slow for him, and it was taxing his tenacity and his fortitude to a much higher degree than the most desperate attacks out in the open. There, in the midst of his comrades, fired by the joy of battle, what mattered it to him if he were killed or wounded, or if his brother or his best friend were struck down by his side? His blood was up, and his only wish and thought was to get to close quarters with the enemy in a square hand-to-hand fight. But in the sapping operations it was quite different. There was no excitement, no *banzai*-business about that. It was daily, hard, prosaic, work, digging his way through the hard soil, with only a couple of comrades toiling and sweating alongside of him,

with bullets and shells flying about them, and with the Russian surprise parties continually making bayonet attacks or blowing them to pieces with hand grenades ; and always, all the time, the sight of the wounded being carried away, and the dead, sewn up in rice-bags, being taken to their last resting-place. No, they did not like it, and they did not understand it, and the majority of the officers shared their feelings.

"I had to show them this," said General Nogi to me at a luncheon party at his headquarters, pointing to an old Russian pickaxe, worn down at both points nearly to the eye, "in order to make them see by what means the Russians had been able to beat us, and to make them understand that there was only one way of getting even—dig, dig, dig, as the Russians had digged, and," he added smiling, "I think I made them see it, and swallow it too, though it seemed a rather bitter pill for them."

It would have been better for the Japanese now, and still more so later, if they had fully realized this lesson and carried their saps right up to and into the positions they desired to take. But here, again, they were too sanguine and in too great a hurry. Of course, the nearer the saps were carried up to the enemy's positions, the more difficult the work became and the greater the losses. The men got irritated. They wished to push on and have done with it. The forts seemed so near, only an easy stone's throw away ; why not cover this small intervening space at a run and storm the positions, as they had done time and again ; lose the men they must lose in an honest assault, where each could make a fight for it, and where even death would be glorious ; instead of dribbling the men out, day after day,

night after night, killed like rats in a hole and degraded by coolie work instead of their heart's desire—good honest fighting? Most of the officers felt the same, and the result was that the assaults were made prematurely, and that their losses became much larger than they need have been. Though a serious matter, the result of facing these minor defence works in this manner did not prove so fatal as it became later on, against stronger positions, where this little "open-space" concession to the national spirit not only lost them many thousands of men, but also completely frustrated their attempts to capture the forts.

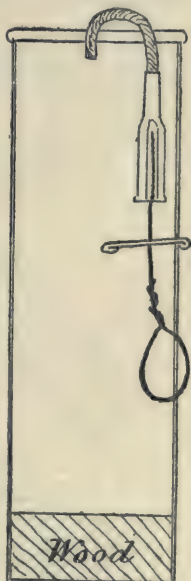
The September attacks were also remarkable because it was here that, for the first time, dynamite hand grenades were used on an extensive scale by both sides, and it has been interesting to note how this weapon, as the siege progressed, gained steadily increasing importance until it became the main weapon of both armies in all fighting at close quarters.

The Russian hand grenades consisted of old, round cannon balls, or old mountain-gun shells, often also, later, of the brass cylinders of quick-firing-gun cartridges, filled with dynamite and provided with an ordinary Bickford fuse with a burning time of fifteen seconds. The Japanese had the dynamite encased in ordinary tin canisters holding about a pound; they were much less destructive than the Russian bombs. During the attacks on the fortifications in Shuishi village the Japanese carried these bombs with them, with the intention of using them to destroy the caponiers and other inner defence works in the forts. They were on the following day met by the Russians with the same missiles, and the terrible effect of these hand grenades against

living men soon opened their eyes to the value of this new weapon as a means of offence. It was, to them, just like carrying artillery right into the enemy's positions for use in hand-to-hand encounters where their shell and shrapnel could be of no assistance. From this time, both sides used these grenades freely, though I think that, on the whole, they were of greater service to the Russians than to the Japanese, as my tale of later events will bear out. In these early fights the fuses frequently burnt too long, and it often happened that a Russian bomb thrown in amongst the Japanese was picked up and hurled back again amongst the defenders. This defect was remedied later.

At first the fuses were lighted by a match or by an ordinary rope fuse; later, especially on the Russian side, the fuse was ignited by an improvised friction-tube arrangement. To the end of the Bickford fuse was attached a rifle cartridge, filled with powder, into which was inserted a quill containing the priming and a thin wire; this caused the ignition by friction when drawn out.

As the hand grenades proved so efficacious it was natural that both parties should wish to extend their sphere of action to longer ranges, and consequently the Russians first, and the Japanese shortly afterwards, constructed wooden mortars, from which the bombs could be thrown distances up to a couple of hundred yards. The Japanese mortars were constructed of two half-

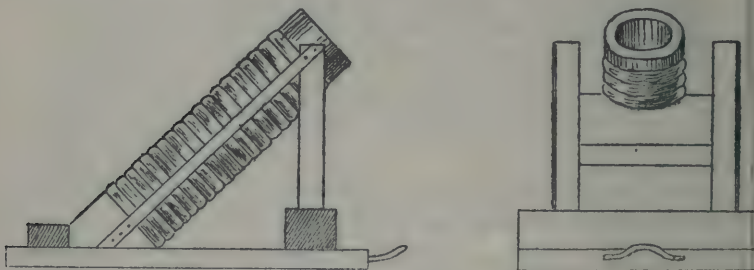


A RUSSIAN HAND
GRENADE.

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cylindrical pieces of wood of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ ins. thickness, held together by strong bamboo hoops, so as to form a barrel about 2 ft. 2 ins. long, with an inner diameter of about 5 ins. The barrel was fixed to a wooden bedplate, at a constant angle of 45 degrees, and the different ranges between 50 and 200 yards were obtained by changing the weight of the powder charges by which they were fired.

The Japanese made acquaintance with two other kinds of arms, which, however, only played a very subordinate *rôle* during the fights about Port Arthur, in these same days. After the



WOODEN MORTAR FOR DYNAMITE BOMBS.

Shuishi lunettes had been captured, six mines were discovered and unearthed in front of the "B" and "A" lunettes, and both here and at the Red Redoubt several fish torpedoes and two torpedo tubes were found. The mines here were all contact mines, and none of them were exploded during the repeated attacks on the lunettes. Later on, during the attacks on the permanent forts, other mines, contact as well as electric, were found, the majority of them being discovered and made harmless before they exploded; a few, however, burst, but the effect was slight, the greatest number killed by any one mine being

four—four men in front of Erhlung fort. After the experiences at Port Arthur it is not likely that mines will ever come to play a prominent part in fortress defence, and the Chefoo reports of whole battalions being blown up at a time by mines, which even the Japanese Minister to Great Britain took an opportunity of ridiculing, become to us even more absurd than the ordinary nonsensical drivel on which the inventive gentlemen at this little Chinese seaside resort fed the world for many months, making of the grand, austere drama of Port Arthur a silly, inane burlesque.

That fish-torpedoes should be used on land is a thing which probably few people would dream of; but the Russians have evidently thought otherwise; for at the said defence works no less than eight torpedoes were found. To my knowledge, however, they were never fired, although the Japanese assert that the head of a fish-torpedo was fired at them from a mortar during one of the attacks on Erhlung fort.

To conclude this chapter I shall finally point out the grim determination with which the Russian soldiers stood to their posts, awaiting the bayonet charges of overwhelming forces, and in most places fighting to the bitter end. It seems that up to this time the smaller but more agile Japanese was at least equal, if not superior, to his bulkier, stronger antagonist. I have been told that he used to duck down and thrust his bayonet from below, under the guard of the Russian, stabbing him in the abdomen. Later on, it seems, the Russians learnt to be on their guard against this stratagem, and in most hand-to-hand encounters, where the disparity in numbers has not been too great, they proved to be more than a match for their enemies.

CHAPTER XV

OCTOBER

THE September attacks had thus been but partially successful. The Japanese, in capturing the fortifications in Shuishi valley, had carried out one part of their plans; the way was now open for bringing saps forward against Erhlung and Sungshuh forts, and they had put an end to the very harassing enfilading fire from the Red Redoubt against their advanced positions in the valley. On the other hand, they had failed in the attacks on the Metre hills. They had taken 108 Metre Hill, it is true; but, dominated by the guns of the stronger neighbouring position, it was not of the slightest value to them for the present.

As I have remarked, the operations in this direction had partly had the object of ascertaining if the route along the Siuchiatun valley or the western plateau would prove to be easier lines of advance and the Metre range positions more favourable points of attack than the eastern fort-ridge; in other words, the attacks had been in the nature of a strong reconnaissance in force. But the strong resistance, the meagre results, and the heavy losses had convinced the Japanese that any advance here would be most difficult. As General Nogi did not, at this time, attach so much importance to the possession of 203 Metre Hill as he

later, for other reasons, came to do, though the sapping works against this position continued, he gave up for the nonce the idea of any advance in this direction, and reverted to his original plan of making the eastern section his principal point of attack.

Two considerations contributed to strengthen his resolution.

Just at this time the first six of the large 28 cm. (11'3 in.) howitzers arrived, and he knew that twelve more were on the way. Never before had guns of such size or anything approaching it been used in siege operations against land forts, and it seemed to him most unlikely that the engineers who had constructed the fortifications of Port Arthur would have taken into consideration the possibility of attack by such fearful machines of destruction. Their calculation of the strength necessary for the bomb-proofs, caponiers, breast-works, &c., would have been based on too low estimates, and the forts, accordingly, would not be of sufficient strength to withstand a heavy bombardment by his new monster guns. These howitzers were very powerful, and could throw shells weighing nearly 500 lbs. up to 9,000 yards. The shells were filled with 66 lbs. of melinite, and the effect of these huge masses of steel and the explosion of these large violent charges would, he felt sure, be most disastrous to the inner defences and to the garrison of the forts, coming, as they would do, thundering down from the sky right into the interior of the forts. He would pour them in in such quantities and so incessantly that, when the right moment arrived and the saps had been carried up to the foot of the forts, it would be an easy matter for the infantry to make the last rush and drive the demoralized defenders out of the

ruins of what had once been strong, formidable fortifications. Once the eastern fort-ridge had been taken, he felt pretty sure that Port Arthur would surrender—not that the two other sections which help to make up the fortress as a whole would not be able to hold out for a long time unsupported by the eastern forts, but because during these last attacks two observations he had made seemed to point to the end being not far off.

At the storming of 180 Metre Hill an officer and two men had been taken prisoners. The officer was elderly, between fifty and sixty, a fine-looking old soldier, with a long white full beard, just the type of "the little father" of his company, still often found in Russia. During the slaughter on the top of the hill this officer, who was wounded in the arm, and the two men who looked after him, had been spared, probably on account of his age and his venerable looks. He told the officer of General Nogi's staff who received him on his arrival at the 1st Division's headquarters that he was a captain in the commissariat service; but that during the last day's fight he had been commanding, as sole officer, no less than five companies of infantry on 180 Metre Hill.

In the Shuishi lunettes, before they were evacuated, the Russians had had time to destroy all their guns, but many other things, including clothing and personal belongings, had to be left behind, and from their regimental badges the Japanese saw that the garrison of the lunettes had been made up of soldiers and sailors of no less than seventeen different regiments and ships' crews. Both these facts seemed to point decidedly to a scarcity of officers and men in the enemy's camp, and it was therefore not prepos-



TRANSPORT OF AN 11-INCH HOWITZER

terous to conjecture that, with the further losses entailed by the defence of the eastern fort-ridge, and with a most essential part of the fortress in the hands of the enemies, the Russians would give up the hopeless fight and surrender. Anyhow, that was how the ever-optimistic Japanese looked at it. Under the devastating fire of their new big guns the decimated garrison would be powerless to withstand a determined assault by General Nogi's entire force. The end was drawing near ; Port Arthur was doomed.

To carry out their new plans two things, then, were necessary : to bring the big howitzers, which began to arrive about the middle of September, into position, and to carry their saps up so near to the eastern forts that an assault could be made on them from the last parallels. The 11-in. howitzers are constructed after a Spezzia model. They consist of three main parts, the barrel, the carriage, and the slide, weighing respectively ten, six, and seven tons. The slide is mounted on a centre pivot set in heavy concrete. The weight of the shell is 475 lbs., with a bursting charge of 66 lbs. melinite ; there are seven different weights of driving charges used, according to the range desired, the biggest being 44 lbs. It may well be imagined that the transport of these guns to their proper positions was no easy matter. Too heavy to be carried over the light railway, they had to be hauled on rollers over the poorly made roads. Then there was the construction of the concrete bedplates and the heavy work of mounting the guns and fitting them with their gear. A new platform had to be constructed along the railway line, and strong sheerlegs had to be erected for unloading from the trucks. All the heavy ammunition must be transported to the different battery

positions ; bomb-proofs for the squads had to be built, and so on. Altogether it was a long and difficult task, and it was only at the beginning of October that the first of these howitzers was mounted, and not until early in November that the last two were in position and ready for work.

It was very fortunate for the Japanese that the Russians had no balloon in Port Arthur. If they had been able to discover and locate the big howitzers during their transport or whilst being mounted, the big fortress guns would have made it impossible for the Japanese to bring them into position. We can only wonder that a fortress of such importance, and so well equipped in most other respects, should have been lacking in so essential a part of modern defences. It seems inexplicable also that, when the big howitzers began to open up, the Russians did not try to improvise a balloon, so that they could observe the effect of their own fire against them. It should not have been a very difficult matter, and it might have changed the history of the whole siege, and perhaps of the whole war, if the big howitzers could have been put out of action, as a balloon probably would have enabled the Russians to do ; for it was by means of these howitzers that later on the Russian fleet in the harbour of Port Arthur was destroyed.

As I have mentioned previously, sapping operations had already been commenced against 203 Metre Hill and North Kikuan fort about the middle of August. After the capture of the fortifications in Shuishih valley, saps were opened against Erhlung and Sungshuh forts, and, as General Nogi's new plans consisted in taking the whole northern front of the eastern fort-ridge, sapping was commenced towards three fortified

hills here, called by the Japanese Hachimaki-yama, "P" fort and Kobu fort, as well as towards the lofty and powerful East Kikuan fort, which completely dominated the other forts on the ridge, and therefore had to be taken simultaneously with them. This fort on the east side, and Sung-shuh fort on the west side, then became the boundaries of the Japanese field of sapping operations during the two following months, October and November. Later on, about the end of October saps were opened against the Chinese wall from the captured Panlung and "P" forts. Though the soil in parts, especially to the east, was alluvial, the pioneers had mostly to cut through shale rock, and in places through very hard limestone.

The Japanese had set themselves to do a gigantic task. More than thirteen miles of these passages were dug out, and during the following five or six weeks we saw the whole country in front of the eastern fort-ridge covered with a complete network of zigzag trenches. It was slow and dangerous work. Only one or two men could toil at the head of the saps, digging sufficiently deep to secure protection from the enemy's bullets. Other larger parties followed, widening and deepening the sap, and shovelling the evacuated earth into bags with which to build up the breastworks. Over 1,200,000 bags were utilized for this purpose, exclusive of the large number of empty rice-bags which in most places were called into service. As the price per bag was about 8*d.*, the sum spent by the Japanese in sandbags alone must have amounted to nearly £40,000 sterling. This will perhaps give a better idea of the magnitude of the scheme than the most detailed descriptions.

Under any circumstances it was a tremendous undertaking; but with the Russians—ever alert, ever obstructive, ever full of initiative and pluck—as antagonists, the work became a truly herculean task, and it is to my mind as much to the credit of the brave Japanese army here that it carried out the hard, dangerous, and laborious task in so comparatively short a time, in face of so great obstructions, as the most brilliant assault ever delivered by the armies in the north.

The official reports published in Tokyo do not, as a rule, contain more than the bare facts (and very often not even the bare facts) about what took place here; this or that position had been attacked and taken, so many big shells were fired against this or that ship, &c., but by people who know how to read between the lines quite a pathetic story may be read into the dry-as-dust official documents. Read, for instance, the following extracts (as translated in *The Japanese Times*):—

October 19th: "The trenches directed to Erhlungshan and the north fort of Tungkikuanshan (North Kikuan Fort) having advanced quite close to the enemy's position, are now subject to assiduous obstruction from the enemy day and night."

October 21st: "The enemy's obstruction gradually increases, but our work is steadily progressing."

October 22nd: "Our work in the trenches directed to Erhlungshan and Tungkikuanshan continues to receive the enemy's obstruction."

October 23rd: "Our troops are suffering very much from the enemy's obstructions, and their work is consequently making little progress."

For us, who have seen and know what these

"assiduous obstructions" mean, out of the dry, spare words rise pictures and scenes—of small Russian surprise parties stealing up by night, a rifle with bayonet fixed in the one hand, and a couple of hand grenades tucked away under the other arm, carefully, silently picking their way as it had been planned by daylight, down to where the regular thud of pick-axes in the hard ground is heard. The Japanese sentries catch a glimpse of fleeting shadows, and then a shot rings out. The men throw away their tools and grasp their rifles, a machine gun joins in, and in a few seconds a full orchestra is going. Then comes a tremendous crash; a big flame leaps up through the night; another detonation follows, and yet another, then perfect silence and the darkness doubly dark. In the sap lie half a dozen corpses, fearfully torn and mangled, and a mixture of blood and bits of flesh that a minute before was a young, strong, living man, and which now has to be shovelled into a bag to be carried away.

On other occasions larger forces were sent out, and the object was more than to kill a few of the enemy's soldiers and destroy a small part of the work nearest to the sap-head. These were proper sorties of some fifty or a hundred men, and their task was to drive the men working in the approaches back behind the walls of the nearest parallel. That accomplished, some of the Russians engaged the troops here, while the rest blew up and demolished the saps, the work, perhaps, of days of hard toiling. On these occasions the most reckless bravery was shown by the Russians, and the Japanese met them in the same spirit. From the way even the unemotional, taciturn Japanese officers and men speak of these encounters in the dark one feels that to find any-

thing equal to them in fierceness and savagery we must go back to the days of an Attila.

In the daytime the enemy's "assiduous obstruction" took other forms—shell, shrapnel, and rifle-bullets, and later on, when the saps had been carried close up to the forts, dynamite bombs from the small mortars. The breastworks were in many places and many times broken down by the shells, the sandbags were torn to tatters and the earth ran out, leaving an open gap, to pass which the Russian sharpshooters then made a difficult task. When the Russians, as often happened, especially before their ammunition began to run short, fired big shells into the approaches, they not only demolished the breastworks but the saps as well, killing a large number of men. The Russians placed some of their best marksmen in the attacked forts, and weeks of steady practice made their firing so accurate that it was very dangerous to peep through the small loopholes in the sandbag walls of the parallels or the approaches. Many a man took his last look into the world through one of these small peep-holes.

In this way sapping parties were never left in peace by day or night, and it was no wonder that of the total number of pioneers working in front of Port Arthur, more than fifty per cent. were placed *hors de combat*. But though the Russians greatly obstructed and retarded the proceedings, the Japanese worked their way steadily forward, and every day brought them a little nearer to the forts they intended to attack.

While the sapping operations thus went on, the first of the "big babies" had been mounted, and on October 2nd, after a couple of days' practice for the squads with blank cartridges, the first



A BATTERY OF 11-INCH HOWITZERS IN ACTION

shot was fired, being directed against the Russian battleship *Peresviet*, lying in the west harbour. The fifth shot was successful. The fire was next turned against the forts on the eastern ridge. The range here was also speedily found, and the effect seemed most satisfactory. The huge shells came sailing in a large curve, so slowly that we could easily follow their flight if we stood behind the guns; on striking, they threw up an immense cloud of dust and smoke, and it appeared as if it would not be a very difficult task to smash up the forts altogether with these powerful shells. The Japanese were very pleased, as well they might be. Their practice had been excellent, and, from all they could observe, their calculations seemed to prove correct.

During the following days, when several more of the 11-in. howitzers were mounted, the bombardment with these big guns increased, as each of them had to find the exact range for the different positions of the enemy. Several of the warships were hit and damaged, and after a few days the Russian fleet took refuge under Paijushan hill, where they were out of sight from any part of the Japanese lines. The bombardment evidently told on the forts also. Their walls crumbled under the reiterated heavy blows, and, with tons of earth thrown up for every shell that struck, it seemed as if it could only be a question of time when the strong forts would be reduced to huge, shapeless mud-heaps, where nothing could live and where no serious resistance could possibly be offered when the psychological moment arrived for an infantry advance.

The largest and strongest of the forts on the eastern ridge was Erhlung, the "Double Dragon." It was a newly completed structure, of nearly

double the size of any in this section. With very tall, massive walls, built of earth of a reddish hue, it stood out clearly against the green surrounding country, looking overwhelmingly powerful. In front and on each side of it were several smaller advanced defence works which had to be taken before the saps could be carried right up to the fort. Some of these were built to defend the water reservoir of the city, situated close to the railway bank; others were more to the west, in front of Sungshuh fort, and finally there was the fortified hill to the east of Erhlung, which the Japanese call Hachimaki-yama, and which is separated from the Erhlung hill by a deep, narrow gorge.

By about October 10th the Japanese had carried their saps close up to the railway embankment, and during the following week a series of assaults were made on these earthworks, which in most cases were taken at the point of the bayonet. If ever Napoleon's famous remark, "*Dans la guerre comme dans l'amour on vient toujours au corps*," has proved true, it has certainly been during this siege.

The different smaller attacks and counter-attacks, though often fought with great fierceness and bravery on both sides, are of no particular interest in the history of the siege or from a military standpoint, so I shall confine myself to giving the following bare facts.

From October 9th the bombardment, especially the shelling from the big howitzers, became more and more heavy. The fire was directed against the forts and positions along the whole eastern fort-ridge, particularly against Erhlung and North Kikuan forts.

On October 10th some small trenches in front

of Erhlung were taken. In the night the Russians made a counter-attack, which was repulsed; Japanese casualties about fifty. On the 11th three companies of a battalion of the 1st Division attacked and captured a small entrenchment at the railway culvert in front of Erhlung. Reinforced by a detachment of the 9th Division, they pushed on a little further to the west, where another entrenchment had been constructed to defend the larger railway bridge here. This attack was repulsed with a loss of about sixty men. Before dawn the next morning (October 12th) the Japanese succeeded in bringing up, unseen by the Russians, a considerable force of the 19th regiment to some dead ground in front of the work. They lay hidden here for nearly the whole of the next day, and when, at about 4.30 p.m., they made a rush for the trenches, the defenders, who had no idea that any considerable force was drawn up so close to their position, were completely surprised, and fled in disorder at the sudden onslaught, leaving their overcoats on the ground and their rifles piled; Japanese casualties thirty-eight. A counter-attack in the night was repulsed after some heavy close-range fighting.

On the 16th the fortified Hachimaki hill was captured. The attack was made in the orthodox way; first, several hours of tremendous shelling, in which the big howitzers took a prominent part; then an hour's very heavy shrapnel fire; next a rush up from the last parallel and from the donga to the west of the hill, followed by a short, sharp hand-to-hand encounter, during which the Russians were driven slowly back through traversed trenches towards the Chinese wall. The Russians now began a galling fire from rifles and machine-guns which stopped any further advance on the

part of the Japanese in this direction. In the night came a counter-attack, which was repulsed. The Japanese casualties were about 150. The hill was not very strongly fortified, and did not form any very important part of the Russian defences, but it was of some value to the Japanese, because it was situated next to the two Panlung forts which they had captured in August, thereby making the gap in the foremost Russian lines bigger. However, as I have already pointed out in a former chapter, the Russian counter-move of strengthening the defences of the Chinese wall considerably lessened the value of any of these positions to the Japanese.

After the capture of these outworks, the saps could be carried right up to the foot of the glacis of the forts, and though the difficulties increased and the Russian counter-attacks waxed ever fiercer, the approaching trenches steadily wound their way closer and closer to the enemy's stronghold. A few days more, and the Japanese would be in position to attack the last of the outworks in front of the forts, the infantry trenches at the foot of the glacis of Erhlung and Sungshuh forts.

On October 25th we were summoned to General Nogi's headquarters, and passing on our way there the stationary hospital of the 9th Division, we knew at once what was to happen. The tents and Chinese houses constituting the hospital were completely empty, all the inmates having been sent down to Dalny. A thorough cleaning had been effected, and the courtyard strewn with lime. The all-pervading smell of carbolic acid told us clearly enough that the medical staff had prepared everything for a big fray.

On reaching headquarters, Major Yamaoka, who met us, explained that a general attack would

shortly be made on the eastern fort-ridge. On the 26th the glacis trenches in front of Erhlung and Sungshuh forts would be taken. When that had been done, the saps would have been everywhere brought near enough for a general assault to be made. The forts would be exposed to a heavy bombardment, lasting for several days, during which the big howitzers would play the most prominent part. When the interior of the forts had been in this way completely destroyed, determined attacks would be made by all the Japanese forces, not stopping or giving the enemy a chance of rest or recuperation until the goal was reached and the forts captured. The attacks would be directed against all the *enceinte* forts from Sungshuh to East Kikuan. The capture of Sungshuh fort would be left to the right division, and the central division were to attack Erhlung and "P" forts, leaving to the left division the task of capturing North Kikuan, Kobu and East Kikuan forts.

On the morning of the 26th the bombardment commenced. It was not very heavy at first, but increased considerably from about eleven o'clock. The Russians took up the challenge and engaged the Japanese batteries, chiefly trying to locate the big howitzers, sixteen of which were now in position. The heavy white smoke which rose sky-high at every shot (the howitzers used black powder) gave a very good indication of their whereabouts, and the Russians, who had excellent maps of the country, were able to locate them with a certain degree of accuracy. Their big shells often came quite close to the batteries, giving the gun squads an exciting time. One or two of the concrete bedplates of the howitzers were struck and the guns temporarily put out of action, but the Russians, being unable to observe the effect of their

firing, could not tell when they had the exact range, so the effect of the large number of shells fired at the Japanese howitzers was but slight. Most of the time the Japanese gunners could stand to their guns in perfect safety.

The infantry attacks on the trenches at the foot of the glacis of Erhlung and Sungshuh forts commenced about five o'clock in the afternoon. On this occasion the Japanese did not, as usual, precede their attack by a rain of shrapnel over the enemy's positions. This part of the work was now taken over by the big howitzers, from which shells by the hundred were hurled over the forts, enveloping them in a cloud of dust and smoke, almost hiding them from our view. Then followed a charge up from the last parallel to the trenches, a distance of some thirty or forty yards.

At Erhlung two parties went up with a short interval between each. The men now wore the dark winter uniforms, making them easy to see and follow. For a few moments they stood outlined on the top of the breastwork against the smoke of the bursting shells. Then they disappeared into the trenches. What had happened to them we did not know, but the small blueish puffs of smoke which leapt forth told us that the Russians had engaged the attacking force in a hand-to-hand fight and were using the hand grenades against them. Suddenly there was a loud report, and at the western part of the trench a big column of earth and smoke was flung heavenwards; a mine (*fougasse*) had been exploded, killing—as we learnt later—four Japanese soldiers; but whether the Japanese had succeeded in driving out the Russians or whether they had all been slaughtered we could not tell. The latter conjecture seemed more likely, for after a lapse of about ten minutes

two other lots of men were seen to emerge from the parallel. They did not reach the trenches, but stopped short, without attempting to get any nearer. The smoke that hung over this part of the battlefield was so heavy that we could not see what they were doing; they were apparently standing immovable there, and we supposed that the enemy's fire was too galling to make it possible for them to cover the last little bit of the way which separated them from the trenches, and that they had found dead ground whereon to await a favourable moment for their last rush. If our theory was correct, there could be little doubt about the fate of their comrades who had reached and plunged into the enemy's trenches; they would stay in there for ever.

While we watched the attack on the trenches in front of Sungshuh Fort—which seemed to proceed more satisfactorily—and followed the hard-fought duel between the batteries on both sides, we every now and again turned our glasses on to the two small clusters of men under the Erhlung trenches, but for some time we could see no change in the situation here. They remained in the same place. After a while, at moments when the cloud of smoke was less opaque, we thought that they had sat down, but on looking more intently the actual state of affairs suddenly dawned upon us. They were digging trenches. As we watched, the figures gradually grew smaller and smaller, until presently we lost sight of them altogether; it was as if the earth had swallowed them up. But instead of the men, we now saw two parallel black lines leading transversely up towards the grey glacis. We understood it all now. The Russian trenches had been taken at the first assault, and the Japanese had at once set to work to connect

them with their last parallel by a double line of approaches. Between eighty and a hundred yards of saps were dug within less than an hour and under the enemy's fire—a splendid piece of work.

The trenches on the glacis of Sungshuh Fort had also been captured in the first rush, the total losses of the Japanese in both places not exceeding 250 men, killed and wounded. Early next morning, between three and five o'clock, several most determined counter-attacks were made on the captured trenches in front of Erhlung, but after two hours of nearly continuous fighting at close range the Russians were finally driven back, leaving sixty dead on the ground, the Japanese casualties amounting to over 300. Against the trenches in front of Sungshuh four different sorties were made between 9.30 p.m. and 2.50 a.m., in which the guns of Antzeshan and Itzeshan supported the Russians, but all were repulsed after fierce hand-to-hand fighting. The Russians left twenty dead here; the Japanese losses amounted to 124. When the morning of the 27th dawned, the Japanese were in safe possession of the trenches, and they were now for the first time face to face with the real forts of Port Arthur.

During the next three days the bombardment steadily increased in force and vehemence. On the 29th and the whole of the following night it was particularly heavy, the furious thundering of the big guns never stopping for a moment. The Russians made several very determined counter-attacks on the captured trenches at the foot of the glacis in front of Sungshuh fort. On the night of the 29th they even succeeded in driving out the Japanese after a fierce tussle, and though they were able to hold it but for a few hours the Russians attained their object, preventing the

Japanese from carrying their saps any further up the glacis towards the fort.

At dawn on the 30th, the day fixed by the Japanese for their general attack, they were in the following positions *vis-à-vis* the forts which they intended to assault :—

At Sungshuh fort the Russian trench at the foot of the glacis had been converted into a last siege parallel.

At Erhlung fort the saps had been carried right up to the moat.

At " P " fort and Kobu fort the saps were some thirty yards away from the enemy's positions.

At North Kikuan fort the Japanese were at the moat.

At East Kikuan fort the last parallel was about 300 or 400 yards away from the fort.

On the 30th of October the second general attack on Port Arthur took place.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SECOND GENERAL ATTACK

THE second general attack on Port Arthur was, like the first, premature. The first attack may have been justifiable because strategical considerations of the utmost importance made it imperative that the fortress should be taken with the shortest possible delay, and because there was at that time a chance, however remote, of winning the prize by one supreme effort. But there was, when the second general attack took place, no such reason to justify the attempt. There was no need for precipitating matters. Liaoyang had been fought and Sha-ho won ; the auspicious moment had passed, and no addition to the troops in the north, which might have been furnished by the besieging army here, could have materially changed the strategical situation there.

As my account of this event will bear out, the Japanese were most inadequately prepared for the attack. They must have known, or ought to have known, that they were not in a position to make the attempt. The second general attack on Port Arthur was undertaken for purely sentimental reasons ; and while sentimentality is not of much use in any circumstances in life, it is absolutely fatal in the game of war.

The Japanese people were not pleased with General Nogi. From the armies in the north,

and from the navy, they received news constantly, and always good news. Only from Port Arthur was there nothing. An ominous silence reigned over this theatre of operations, the one towards which their eyes had been turned with the greatest expectation and the greatest concern. Although no official information had been given out, and although the military authorities had succeeded to a remarkable degree in keeping even unofficial news from the people, they could not, in the long run, prevent tales and rumours from sifting out, which showed that the situation here was far from satisfactory. The fact that the place had not yet been captured was in itself enough; the people had confidently expected the army to be in possession of the fortress in July, now over three months ago. They did not realize, because no one had been allowed to tell them, what a tremendously difficult problem confronted the army here. All they knew was that it had failed in what they considered the most important part of the year's campaign. The papers began to demand "the speedy reduction of Port Arthur," as they expressed it, and clamoured for more troops to be sent out. A couple of weeks later the *Jiji*, the *Times* of Japan, demanded that, if necessary, 100,000 men should be sent to reinforce the besieging army and be hurled against the forts, and so finish the affair—little dreaming what fate most probably would have been meted out to them, had the attempt been made at this juncture. A very strong popular feeling against the Third Army existed, and it cannot be wondered at that this outcry rankled deeply in the hearts of the officers and men who for months had fought so desperately and with such indomitable courage against tremendously strong positions, defended by soldiers every

whit as brave and stubborn as themselves. Here, as so often before in history, the popular outcry went far to precipitate events and to spur even cool-headed men beyond their better judgment.

And still another reason, also a purely sentimental reason, but one which with the Japanese carries the greatest weight, strongly urged General Nogi to attempt an attack at this stage. November 3rd, the Emperor's birthday, was drawing near. All Japan—nay, the whole world—eagerly expected that the army here should rise to the occasion and make a desperate effort to take Port Arthur and present it as a birthday gift to the Emperor. Although I do not think even the most sanguine of the Japanese officers here really believed that they would be able to capture the whole fortress before that day, they confidently hoped that at least some of the most important of the forts would fall into their hands.

So the attack was decided and planned. A tremendous bombardment was carried out for many days and nights, and everything was arranged for a vigorous assault on the Eastern fort-ridge on October 30th. The saps were in most places not carried up to the counterscarps or to the trenches, but the Japanese thought they could easily cover the few intervening yards with a rush. They were aware that the stronger of the forts were surrounded by moats, the exact dimensions of which they did not know, although they had been able to observe that they were very wide and deep; but they had constructed a large number of scaling ladders by means of which they hoped to cross. Once on the top of the parapet, they had little doubt they would be able to overrun the inside of the forts and to crush the defenders with their overwhelming forces.

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October 30th was a fine autumn day. There was not a cloud in the deep blue sky, but it was very chilly, with a light northerly breeze. The whole of the previous night the bombardment had proceeded uninterruptedly. After dawn it increased in strength, until at about eight or nine o'clock it became furious. After ten it abated somewhat, but from about 12.30 p.m. it recommenced with a force and vehemence the like of which we had never seen before nor should ever be likely to see again. On that day over 20,000 shots were fired from the bigger guns alone, not reckoning the many thousands of shrapnel hurled against the positions from the field batteries; and of these 20,000 shots, over 1,800 were fired from the 11-in. howitzers, of which sixteen were now in position. I estimate that, for the couple of hours when the vehemence of the bombardment was at its maximum, over 100 shots must have been fired per minute against the Russian positions. The fire was directed against all the *enceinte* forts on the eastern ridge, against different parts of the covered way and the high battery positions behind, but was particularly strongly concentrated on North Kikuan and Erhlung forts.

The sight was unique. A haze created by the thousands of bursting shells and shrapnel had drawn its blueish veil over the whole landscape, toning down all vivid colours, softening all sharp outlines, and then lay to rest in valleys and gullies, looking like an evening mist. Through this haze an interminable series of white clouds of smoke and big columns of reddish yellow earth leapt up every second; catching the rays of the sun which caressingly enveloped them, painting them with burnt gold and copper and gorgeous colours.

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From our point of observation North Kikuan fort looked, through the haze, somewhat like a flat-topped cone on a tray, formed by the glacis. Into this the big howitzers poured such an incessant fire, that the smoke of the high explosive shells, which rose up from its interior, made it look like a volcano in eruption. The flashes of flame from the bursting shells, the sudden leaps of whitish smoke from the shrapnels, that looked like blocks of lava thrown up from the crater, helped to strengthen the illusion.

At one o'clock sharp, the infantry attacks commenced simultaneously against all the positions. Over the hill-sides and glacis the Japanese swarmed like black ants. But no sooner did the men emerge from the trenches than a hail of shrapnel was poured in amongst them and over the approaches behind, where the supports were coming up. And from the breastworks the Russian infantry blazed at them, killing them by hundreds and crushing the onslaught before it had had time to develop.

The Japanese were for a moment dumfounded. They had felt so sure that the tremendous bombardment, especially the fire from their big howitzers, would have worked such complete havoc with the forts that they would have lost all power of resistance, and now they had to realize that their calculations were all wrong and that the defenders were as lively as ever. How it had happened, they could not for the lives of them understand, nor did they realize it till two months later, when at last they got possession of the forts, and could see for themselves how forts of modern construction will withstand even such a bombardment as they had been exposed to.

But the Japanese would not give in so easily.

In less than half an hour they resumed the offensive.

At Sungshuh fort the attacking party reached the moat, but here they were stopped. They had carried with them scaling-ladders; but the Japanese had under-estimated the dimensions of the moat, and the ladders proved too short and therefore useless. This peculiar mistake was in reality a piece of very good luck for them. It seems incredible that the Japanese Headquarter Staff, which had planned the attack, should for a moment have thought it possible to get across the moat of a permanent fort by the help of ladders. To fancy that anybody should go to the expense of blasting a moat thirty to forty feet deep, and forty to fifty feet wide, and several hundred yards long, out of the solid rock and then leave it without defences, allowing an enemy to simply put up ladders and climb across, is such a preposterous idea that it is difficult to credit the otherwise efficient staff of General Nogi with it. But the fact remains, though I confess I am completely at a loss to explain it. As will later be seen, it took the Japanese a month to get into the moat only, and over seven weeks to get across it.

The second rush was repulsed; like the first, with considerable losses. The survivors had to scurry back to their last parallel as best they could, and no more attempts were made against this fort, not even when, at about 3.40 p.m., a Japanese shell struck an ammunition magazine, causing a big explosion and starting a fire in the fort which burnt lustily for nearly two hours.

At Erhlung fort the saps had been carried right up to the moat. The dimensions of this proved also to be too large for the ladders, so no attempt was made to take the place by assault. Instead,

the Japanese tried to fill up the moat with sandbags. It would, of course, require a very large number of bags to build a dam across, and they went on throwing them in for hours, every now and then probing with a long pole to see how high the moat had been filled. But, although their pole was forty feet long, they never succeeded in reaching the bottom. For a long time they could not understand it. Judging by the number of bags already thrown in, they ought certainly to have made more progress, even granting that the moat was very deep and wide. At last it dawned upon them that the Russians carried away their sandbags as fast as they were thrown in. So the Japanese gave up the task.

The attacks on the North Kikuan fort form too long and too interesting a tale to be dismissed in a few words. They deserve a chapter to themselves. Here also the Japanese had a month of very hard work before they succeeded in capturing the moat.

They had better luck with their attacks on the fortified hill situated between the East Panlung and North Kikuan forts, and which they misnamed "P" fort, though it is simply a trench, made partly bomb-proof with timber and sandbags, girding one of the many spurs that run out from Wantai hill. The first rush was repulsed; but a fresh attack was made about twenty minutes later, and this time the Japanese succeeded in carrying the place, and driving the Russians back behind the Chinese wall.

Later in the day two attempts were made to break through the Chinese wall at the back of the captured position, but the concentrated shrapnel fire from the batteries in the rear, and the furious fire from rifles and machine guns behind the

covered way, gave the attacking party such a warm reception that they soon had to retreat, still holding on to the captured trenches.

At about 10.40 in the evening the Russians made a sortie against this "P" fort. Swarming over the walls of the covered way in the dark night, they rushed into the trenches and engaged the Japanese in a desperate hand-to-hand combat. Both sides fought like demons, the Japanese manfully standing their ground against vastly superior forces until nearly every one of them were killed. For a short half hour the position was again in the hands of the Russians.

It was then that Major-General Ichinobe, commander of the 6th brigade, placed himself at the head of one of his battalions, and personally led his men in a new attack on the hard-contested position. His example inflamed his troops. With irresistible force they charged the enemy. Cries of "Banzai" rent the air; a few rifle-shots rang out from the Russians, but the Japanese were in amongst them, and again the well-matched antagonists were engaged in a savage butchery, fighting with bayonets and hand grenades and clubbed rifles, and sometimes even with nails and teeth. After a most vigorous resistance, the Russians were again driven back behind the Chinese wall. The next day it was officially announced that "P" fort would hereafter be called the "Ichinobe" fort.

The Japanese retained this position until the end, as for months before they had held the captured Panlung forts, in spite of the many Russian attempts to drive them out. Of all the brilliant feats of arms accomplished by the Japanese during the siege of Port Arthur, nothing, to my mind, equals the dogged determination with which they

hung on to these semi-permanent positions, regardless of heavy losses, exposed for weeks to a heavy bombardment and a continuous sniping from other points that completely dominated them.

How the Japanese managed to stay there, is a marvel to me. I simply chronicle the fact that they did; explain it I cannot.

Kobu "fort" (another misnomer) is a very small semi-permanent fortification situated on a hillock to the east of North Kikuan fort. The garrison here was easily overpowered and driven out by the troops of the 44th regiment. Leaving a small force in the captured position, the regiment pushed on to attack the Chinese wall, but against the strong fire from the wall and from "Q" fort they were unable to make headway. Recognizing the futility of their attempt, and yet loath to return without having achieved something, the commander took upon himself, without orders, to turn to the left and try to attack the high East Kikuan fort from the west, knowing that the 12th regiment was attacking it in front.

East Kikuan is the highest, and naturally strongest, of all the *enceinte* forts in the eastern section, and it is not, like the Sungshuh, Erhlung, and North Kikuan forts, essentially an infantry work. It consists of two battery positions—a northern, built entirely in concrete and immensely strong, armed with four 6-in. Canet guns, besides field and machine guns, and a southern, separated from the former by a short neck. This latter battery was a semi-permanent construction, armed with two 6-in. naval guns, protected by 1-in. steel shields, and mounted on timber bed-plates. Between the two batteries the Chinese wall ran up. From Kobu fort, skirting the steep East

Kikuan hill, and leading up to the next fort to the south-east, a strong infantry trench was built, provided with traverses and bomb-proofs; this trench later came to be known amongst us by the well-deserved name of "The Tragedy Trench." The distance from the trench up to the fort was some 150 yards along a very precipitous slope.

Against this position it was that the commander of the 44th regiment decided to direct its attack. The galling fire of the defenders from front and right flank had badly thinned their ranks, but there was only one thing left for them now they had launched on the undertaking—to go on and try to take the place by assault. A retreat under the converging fire from the fort, the Chinese wall, and the higher battery positions, would mean disaster, if not annihilation. Part of the attacking force succeeded in reaching the neck between the two batteries, but here they were met by the Russians, who engaged them in a hand-to-hand encounter. The Japanese were decimated by the heavy fire and tired out with their long climb, and, though they fought with their usual bravery, they were no match for the Russians. Nearly the whole force had to pay the penalty of this rash attempt with their lives.

Meanwhile the 12th regiment attacked the position from the north, advancing in two columns. For about ten minutes the hill-side was black with moving men. They overran the "Tragedy Trench," and started on the last difficult climb up to the crest. It was hard work, and the Russian shrapnel and rifle-bullets cut up their ranks in terrible fashion. The number of men that still moved up hill grew rapidly smaller, while the hill-side became dotted all over with corpses and wounded men. Still they pushed on,

and, panting and knocked-out, they reached the crest and swerved round to the right to get up to the neck between the batteries, as it was out of the question to try to attack over the breast-works.

Here they were met in the same way as had been their comrades of the 44th, with bayonets and hand grenades. The encounter was short, the Japanese having no possible chance. We saw them for a short time silhouetted on the skyline, fencing and sparring. Then they suddenly broke down. Some fled in wild disorder down hill towards Kobu fort, most of them dropping under the merciless fire that poured in over them from all sides. Another party retreated the same way they had come up, but they had not gone far before they found their retreat cut off. The Russians had sent a force down from positions more to the east along the "Tragedy Trench," and these hapless Japanese found themselves taken between two fires. By chance they lighted upon some dead ground, where they were fairly sheltered both from the fort and from the trench, and here, at a small place on the bare hill-side, a force of some 100 to 150 men assembled, carrying with them two small white flags.

Round about them the hill-side was strewn with the bodies of their dead and wounded comrades. The wind had freshened, and blew icily cold, and they had no overcoats and very little food. Many of the men were wounded, and from far off Russian sharpshooters were sniping at them the whole time. They knew it would be some time before they were relieved. It was out of the question to send up stretcher-bearers, and the reception the first assault had met with was not calculated to spur on the Japanese to make

another attempt. Night was their only hope—a vain one.

A Russian searchlight was turned on them and on the slopes leading up to them all through the long night, and the Japanese had the August lessons still too fresh in mind to attempt another night attack where the enemy's searchlight could find them. The next morning the wretched little crowd was still there, and two flags were still fluttering, and all day we could see them waving their mute appeal.

But no help arrived. The men were doomed. Some of them were mercifully killed by Russians' bullets, some died from their wounds, but the majority succumbed to hunger and cold. On the morning of the second day the flags were down, but the number of the men did not seem to have decreased. How long some of them lived after that I cannot tell, but as far as I was able to learn they all met the same fate, a slow, terrible death, after sufferings easier to imagine than to describe.

Thus ended the ill-advised second general attack. The real fighting had only lasted for a couple of hours, and when we compared it with the first general attack, we could not but be struck by the difference between the conduct of the men then and now. The assaults were certainly not carried out with anything like the dash and almost superhuman gallantry which had so distinguished the August attacks. The men had been there so long, gazing at the formidable positions in front of them; they had had such heavy losses in working their way up towards them, they had suffered so many small reverses, that not only they, but also their superior officers, were beginning to lose faith and to lose nerve.

The attacks had been badly supported. After the capture of "P" fort, the place was left with so few defenders that the Russians were able to take back the position, and practically wipe out the garrison before supports could come up. At East Kikuan fort a comparatively large force of Japanese were left to perish like dogs without any attempt to relieve them. In both places the reason was the same; the saps had not been carried right up to the enemy's position. The lessons from the September attacks had to be once more forcibly driven home to the Japanese before they took them sufficiently to heart to benefit from them. As I began by saying, the whole attack was premature and inadequately prepared.

The Japanese had gained two small unimportant positions and some very useful experience. They had lost about 3,000 men, and, what was worse, the reverse greatly contributed to unman the besiegers, making them lose faith and nerve when, nearly a month later, they made their third and much larger general attack on the Russian stronghold.

CHAPTER XVII

HELL

(See Plan, Appendix V)

IN the siege of Port Arthur the fighting that took place about North Kikuan fort forms in itself a well-defined chapter, independent to a great extent of the other operations.

It must be borne in mind that the problems which the Japanese had to deal with during this siege were to a great extent absolutely new. They had no experience, no precedents to fall back upon; they had to pick their way along untrodden paths and grapple with problems which could only be solved experimentally. History can tell us of many sieges; but, perhaps with the exception of the siege of Sebastopol, there is none where the conditions bore any great resemblance to the conditions of Port Arthur. The siege of Sebastopol took place nearly half a century back, and with the immense development of offensive as well as defensive means since then, even the lessons of that famous campaign could be of little value to the Japanese in their present task.

As I have mentioned, sapping against North Kikuan fort commenced about the end of August, while it could only begin in the later part of September against the other permanent forts on

the ridge, after the Shuishi lunettes and the Lung-yen redoubt had been captured. It followed, therefore, that the operations against North Kikuan were more advanced, and accordingly more experimental, than at the other forts, where the Japanese could benefit from their experiences here.

The Russian "assiduous obstructions" against the sapping operations towards North Kikuan fort were of a more determined character than at any other place. The distance from the first parallel to the fort was some 800 yards, and to cover this distance approaches of more than 2,000 yards in length, and leading in forty-six windings, had to be dug—not counting the six parallels which they had had to construct in order to defend the advance. The Russian surprise parties and sorties, their continuous shelling and sniping, had been most harassing; the saps had to be made very strong and elaborate, and thus, though the soil was alluvial and easy to work, nearly two months elapsed before the Japanese had worked their way so near to the fort that they could build their last parallel—the sixth—at a distance of some forty yards from the counterscarp.

For the best part of the way the ground had been level or gently sloping, but for the last hundred yards or so the incline became steeper, and from the sixth parallel up to the moat it was so steep, and besides, so exposed to shelling from the higher battery positions, that the Japanese decided to tunnel the last bit up to the moat. The Russians soon discovered what was happening and started counter-mining on a lower stratum. The Japanese sappers heard the faint clicking sound of pickaxes somewhere below them and in front of them without being able exactly to locate it. They understood what it meant; but they

had, of course, to go on in spite of the fate in store for them. No doubt each gang, when its spell of work was over, felt doubly relieved that the explosion had not come during its shift. As the work progressed the sound grew more distinct; the end could not be far off, and the feelings of the sappers, working in the dark tunnel and literally on the top of a mine, may easily be imagined. But whatever they felt, there was no outward sign of it, and the brave fellows worked on undauntedly.

On October 23rd the Russians exploded their mine. A fearful detonation was heard, a thick cloud of earth and dust and whitish smoke leaped skywards, the earth was rent with a violent crash, and the sappers at work were entombed deep in the earth. The explosion destroyed the tunneling works for a considerable length; but, in a way, it helped the Japanese. In a corner of the large crevice which the explosion had made in the ground there appeared what seemed to be part of a concrete wall. It was evident that this was the back wall of the caponier under the counterscarp, built to defend the moat.

The moat running all round the fort was about 30 ft. wide and about 20 ft. deep. It was very strongly fortified. Its flanks were fully exposed to an enfilading fire from Wantai and "Q" forts, but it derived its real strength from the caponier gallery which had been constructed under the front, the eastern flank, and part of the western flank counterscarp. This gallery was built wholly in concrete, with walls more than 6 ft. thick. Along the front and western flank it was partitioned off by thick concrete walls into eight chambers communicating with each other by narrow arched doorways. Protruding into the

moat was the large caponier "h" from which the front and the east flank moat could be raked by machine-gun and rifle fire. From the chamber "g" a very strong, massive steel door led out into the moat. Along the eastern flank the gallery was only about 5 ft. wide; it was not partitioned, and was really only a passage which, through a tunnel "k" under the moat and under the rampart, communicated with the interior of the fort. This part of the gallery was about a hundred yards long, and provided with a few loopholes in its northern part.

During the week following the explosion of the Russian counter-mine the Japanese had the damage repaired. Deep saps with strong sand-bag walls were built up to the spot where the explosion had laid bare a small portion of the caponier gallery, and preparations were made to blast an opening in the wall. The construction of a strong last parallel right at the back of the caponier gallery was also commenced.

It goes without saying that the Russians had not allowed the Japanese to carry out these works undisturbed. Besides their ordinary means of harassing their enemies, surprise parties and sorties, shelling, sniping, and throwing of dynamite bombs from their small mortars—they had invented a new device for impeding the progress of the sapping works. They set fire to the sandbags which made up the breastworks of the saps, so that the earth would run out and the walls collapse. For this purpose they used the brass cylinders of quick-firing-gun cartridges filled with a stuff that burned very long and very fiercely with a flame that could not be put out by water. These ignited the sandbags, which, during the sorties, had often been soaked with kerosene. It

was difficult for the Japanese to detect these cartridges before the fire had taken a firm hold, and even when the smoke had given them warning, it was no easy matter to put the fire out, although they were provided with hand-pumps and buckets of water, because of the difficulty of seeing what took place on the top or the outer side of the breastworks, owing to the danger of showing their heads.

The construction of the seventh parallel on the top of the counterscarp proved to be a very difficult undertaking under the heavy shelling which could be directed against this point. The work here was fraught with a heavy loss of life, and made but slow progress. They therefore thought for a moment of directing their attack against other parts of the fort.

On the night of October 31st an officer was sent with a small reconnoitring party to try to move secretly round to the rear of the fort and find out if it would be easier to cross the moat from there. It was a pitch-dark night, and the little party moved forward very cautiously, the officer creeping in front of his men.

At exactly the same hour one of the small Russian surprise parties started to work round from the rear to make one of their nightly attacks on the sap head. These parties, both crawling forward with the greatest circumspection, suddenly and unexpectedly met. The Russian party also was headed by an officer, and neither side had seen or heard anything of the other till the two officers met. They instantly closed. The Russian was the stronger and heavier man, and got his adversary under him; but the "jujitzu" tricks*

* The "jujitzu" is a special kind of wrestling which is very highly developed in Japan. By the many clever

which all Japanese officers are taught in the military schools now stood him in good stead. He succeeded in extricating himself and stabbing his enemy through the heart. The men on both sides fired their rifles and threw their hand grenades, but as they could see nothing and the alarm was now given, both parties swiftly returned to their quarters without succeeding in their purpose.

On the morning of October 30th, just before the second general attack, the sappers had everything ready for an attempt to capture the moat defences of North Kikuan. They had chiselled a hole in the hard concrete, and placed and exploded a dynamite charge in it, making a wide rent at the bottom of the back wall of the caponier gallery (at "i"). Waiting troops at once rushed to the opening and crept through into the dark compartment, heedless of what might befall them. They never came out again. The explosion had taken place near the doorway between the chambers "b" and "c." While the Japanese crept into "b," the Russians from "c" blew them to pieces with hand grenades. The next move of the Japanese was to place another and larger dynamite charge in the opening made by the first; half the wall of the chamber "b" was blown in, and the Russians, fearing that their assailants would be able to rush the whole gallery, promptly closed the doorway to the next chamber with sandbags.

The Japanese had thus gained a foothold in the moat itself, and they immediately set to work to follow up their advantage. They broke through

tricks it teaches, all based on a thorough anatomical knowledge, even a comparatively weak man has a good chance against a much more powerful opponent.

the wall in the captured chamber, and during the night they constructed a bomb-proof passage of timber and sandbags across the moat and dug a trench leading zigzag up the escarp to the parapet.

On the morning of the 31st, a force of about eighty men was sent across and succeeded in reaching the parapet, where half of the men at once prepared to entrench themselves, while the other half kept the Russians at bay till the trench was completed. This force met a very tragic fate. The Russians brought a mountain gun into their caponier gallery and shelled the bomb-proof passage across the moat to pieces, setting fire to the timber and the bags, thus cutting off the little party's retreat. On the parapet the men had dynamite bombs fired at them from small mortars, and were constantly attacked by the Russian infantry. To recross the moat was out of the question; the few who tried were instantly killed by the Russian sharpshooters, or by the machine guns down in the caponiers. To bring up supports was also impossible. There could be but one end. All perished, the majority being blown to pieces by hand grenades. But it was only on the morning of November 3rd that the last of the little force succumbed, after three long, long days, and still longer nights of hunger and cold and fighting, with a most terrible death staring them in the face. What men have had to endure and suffer in this war passes imagination and defies description.

On the same day, October 31st, the Japanese had better luck in another of their undertakings. Through the opening to the moat a few sappers were sent provided with large dynamite charges, and though nearly all were shot down, they suc-

ceeded first in placing the bombs in the loopholes of the three next chambers, forcing the Russians to evacuate them, so that the Japanese now held the five western chambers of the caponier gallery.

While they had thus succeeded fairly easily in capturing this part of the moat defences, the taking of the remaining portion proved to be a slow and difficult process. For nearly three weeks they fought desperately, day and night, down in these underground dungeons, where even in daytime the light was dim and dull, to get possession of the next two chambers ("f" and "g").

When the explosion in the rooms "c," "d" and "e" took place, the Russians had to scurry back, and the Japanese followed so quickly that there was no time to block the doorway. The Japanese tried to rush through this narrow opening, but were met by the Russians with bayonets and dynamite grenades, and as there was only room for a couple of men to advance at a time, they were unable to break through. Fresh attempts to attack these rooms from the moat side utterly failed, so for weeks the opponents were standing with only a concrete wall between them, fighting for the possession of a narrow doorway.

The room "e" was for most of the time empty, hand grenades and other devilry made it too lively for any one to stay in. Sometimes a man, pushing a sandbag in front of him, would creep on his stomach so near to the doorway that he could throw a dynamite bomb over the sandbag wall which the Russians meanwhile had had time to build up to a man's height, leaving a couple of loopholes for rifles; but more often than not the man was discovered before he could throw his bomb, and a hand grenade put an end to his

attempt. A great percentage of those killed down in this inferno was blown to mincemeat, and had to be shovelled into bags to be carried away.

Day after day passed, and, in spite of considerable losses, no headway was made. The awful struggle down in the dark cellars and the horrible sights of their killed and wounded comrades began to tell severely on the nerves of the men, and the Japanese endeavoured to think of other means and to devise new schemes for driving out the Russians.

One suggested idea was to erect pumping machinery and flood the moat, defences and all; but the nearest water supply sufficiently large for the purpose, the sea, was many miles away. It would be a slow and costly, and, moreover, a very dubious experiment, and the plan was therefore abandoned.

They next tried to pile up stalks of kaoliang (the Chinese high millet) and set fire to them in order to smoke out the Russians. But the device did not work well; the draught took the smoke the wrong way, through the Japanese chambers, choking them and for a time forcing them out of their part of the gallery. The experiment was too dangerous to be tried again.

Russian officers told me of another scheme, of a still more diabolical character, which they assert the Japanese employed. They sent down a man, rigged out in a diver's dress, complete with air-hose and every essential, and provided with a small air-pump, by which he pumped the galleries full of asphyxiating gases. But, they say, it was a stratagem that cut both ways; for, though it certainly drove out the Russians, it also stopped the Japanese from entering until the air had become pure again,—and then they found the

Russians back in their old place. The Japanese deny this stoutly, and declare that, on the contrary, it was the Russians who used asphyxiating bombs against them. Although in this war of horrors nothing would astonish me, I shall refrain from giving any opinion as to which of the two tales—if either—is correct. My experience is that, in the presence of a war correspondent at any rate, both parties trifle with truth in a very wanton way.

Finally the Japanese decided on digging a trench all along the back of the caponier gallery right down to its foundations, thus laying bare the whole back wall. They would then chisel out holes in the wall, fill them with dynamite, and blow up the entire defence work. Quite a good portion of this work had been completed before the Russians, during one of their sorties, learnt what was happening, and immediately commenced counter-mining. On November 18th they exploded their mine, destroying the Japanese trench; but the mine had been so badly placed that, at the same time, it blew a big opening in their own caponier wall at the north-eastern corner ("j"), with the result that they had hurriedly to evacuate the whole front part of the gallery. They still held on to the narrow passage along the eastern flank, the entrance to which was blocked with sand-bags. Sand-bag partition walls were also built further in across the passage, leaving only a small opening in each, which they could easily close in case they had to retire, and they built another sand-bag wall across the moat (at "l") to counterbalance the loss of the front caponier, by keeping the eastern flank of the moat under enfilading fire.

Early in the morning of the 21st five pioneers volunteered to steal out into the moat and place

dynamite bombs in the loopholes in the northern part of the passage. They succeeded in the daring attempt, and, as soon as the explosion took place, the Japanese tore down the sand-bag wall which blocked the entrance to the passage and stormed in. They were promptly driven back by rifle fire from the first improvised partition wall, the small opening in which the Russians had immediately closed with sand-bags.

It looked as if the Japanese would have to begin the old game from the front chambers over again. But one of the men had an idea. He built up a little breastwork of three sandbags, two at the bottom and one on top. He lay down on his back behind them, perfectly sheltered from the enemy's fire; then, bending his knees and bracing his feet against the wall, he pushed his little breastwork in front of him until his legs were fully stretched out. Then another man placed himself between the first man and the wall; both bent their knees; the first man put his feet against the other man's shoulders, who in turn braced his feet against the wall, and in this way the sandbags were pushed on a little further, some seven or eight feet from the entrance. Then they crept back again for more bags, and soon they had built up a breastwork some four or five feet high right across the passage.

From now the game was an easy one. Having built their breastwork three sandbags thick, they now took the bags of the inner row, lifted them up and dumped them on the other side, then the next row in the same manner, and in this way, foot by foot, the breastwork was moved forwards until it was right up against the first Russian partition wall, the loopholes in which they closed with sandbags.

There were only a few Russians in this part of the gallery when the Japanese pioneers rushed up with dynamite charges. Most of them succeeded in retreating behind the partition wall before the explosion took place, but two, who had been standing sentry at the loopholes of the entrance wall, were severely wounded and, for a time, stunned by the shock. When they regained consciousness, the opening in the next wall had been blocked up. They dragged themselves to it and begged and beseeched their comrades to break down the wall to let them in.

It was impossible. They had to be left without, lying hard wounded and helpless on the floor close up to the position. Meanwhile, the Japanese wall came nearer and nearer, slowly but surely, until the two wretches were first hemmed in between the two walls and then buried alive under the sandbags. When I visited the place the same day, their moanings could still be heard.

The following day the Japanese crept up on top of their own breastwork, and commenced tearing the Russian sandbags away. They soon made an opening, and though the Russians stood their ground with grim determination, and fought like demons for hours over this small wall across the narrow passage, the Japanese eventually succeeded in driving them back, whereupon they took refuge behind the next sandbag wall, some forty feet further along the passage.

In this manner the Japanese worked their way from wall to wall, from one dark chamber to another—for in this part of the passage no light could penetrate—fighting with such a fiendish savagery and under conditions so revolting and so ghastly, that they are unparalleled even in the chronicles of this long, terrible siege,—until the

Russians finally gave way and retired to the interior of the fort through the underground passage, blowing this up behind them.

This happened on November 25th, the day before the third general attack on Port Arthur took place.

CHAPTER XVIII

NOVEMBER

THE lessons which the unsuccessful second general attack on October 30th, and the long and bitter fighting for the moat defences in North Kikuan fort, had brought home so forcibly to the Japanese were not lost on them. Already, in discussing the behaviour and the proceedings of the Japanese after the first crushing defeat in August, I have pointed out how, after the first few days of dejection, they pulled themselves together and cheerfully started afresh, basing their new plans on their dearly-bought experiences. It was the same after their reverse in October. There was no hesitation. They saw their mistakes; they recognized that they would have to be corrected; and they acted accordingly. The four weeks that passed between the second and the third general attacks were taken up with all kinds of preparations based upon their latest experiences in the hope of making the next assault a success.

The first lesson the Japanese had drawn from the October attack was that they must carry their saps right up to the fortifications. There must be no half-work here. Even a small open space of thirty or forty yards, which they had thought to cover with a rush, had proved fatal. It had cost them hundreds of lives, broken the

edge of the attack, and damped the ardour and shaken the confidence of the men.

They had also seen that to attack moat defences in the same way as at North Kikuan fort was too slow and too precarious a proceeding, and that other means must be devised to bring the operations against the moats to a speedy and successful end.

They had further found out that whatever reliance was placed in the reports of their many spies as to the condition and the actual strength of the garrison (now estimated to be about 10,000 men), it was evident that Port Arthur was strong enough to withstand even a determined attack, if it was restricted to only one section of the fortifications at a time. Therefore, if a new attack were to have any prospect of success, it must be made on a bigger scale, and comprise also the western section of defences, so that the Russians would be unable to concentrate a very strong force at any of the attacked points.

Finally, they saw that they had very much over-estimated the effect on the forts and trenches of their own bombardment, and they realized that it would be better to expend their ammunition in trying to sink the ships in the harbour, and in destroying the town with its stores, arsenals, and magazines, rather than to go on wasting it against the earth walls and the concrete masses of the forts.

During the month of November the saps were therefore widely extended. Not only were they carried more forward, but the approaches between the parallels were in many places doubled, to facilitate the bringing up of supports and of ammunition, provisions, &c. Especially in front of Erhlung fort, a veritable network of saps was

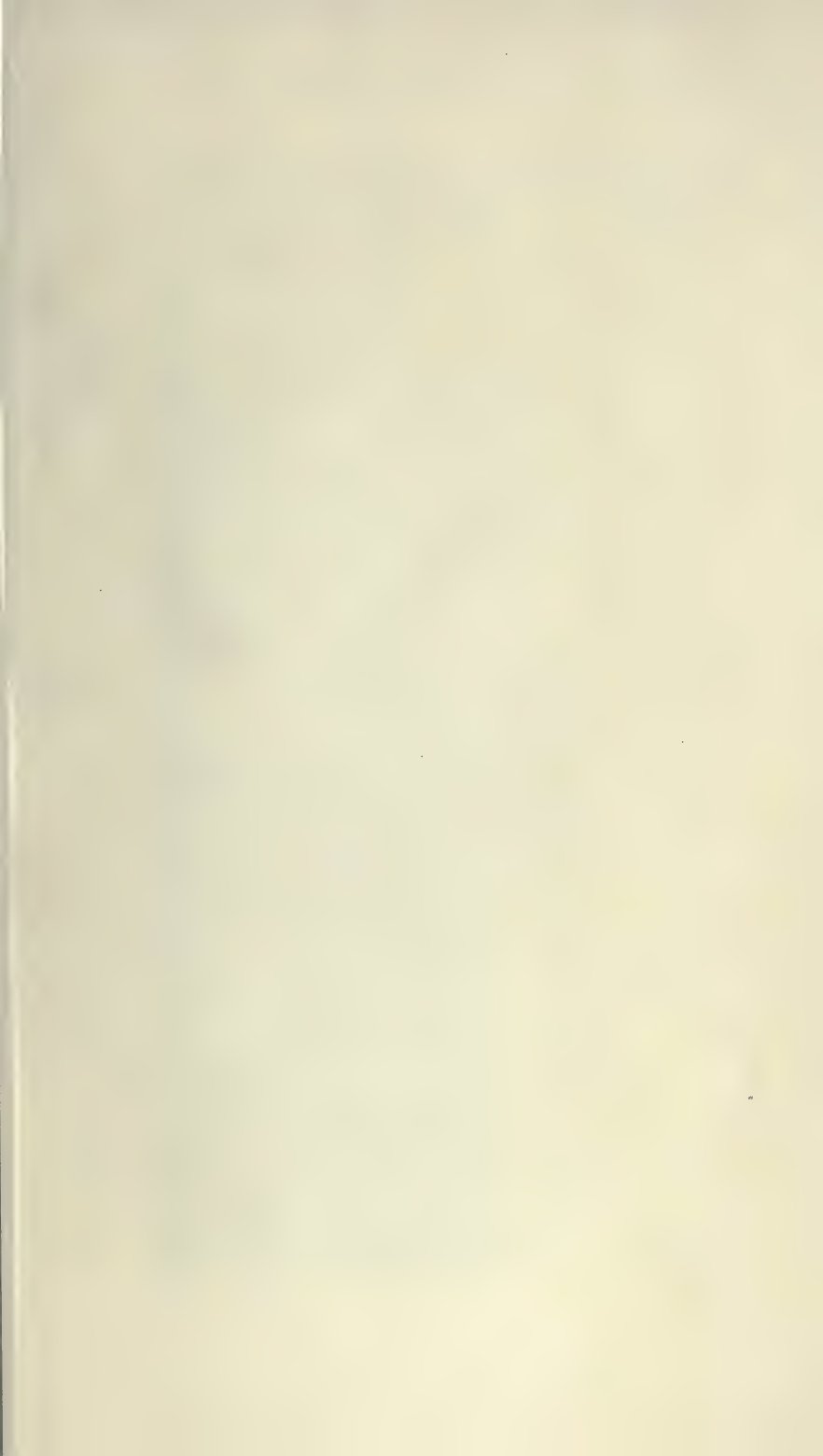
constructed, looking, at a distance, like a spider's web. The saps were also everywhere made deeper and stronger, to give better protection against the ravages of the enemy's shell and the shrapnel fire.

At Sungshuh fort a very strong last parallel was built, thirty yards from the moat, and from there two strongly fortified approaches were carried right up to the top of the counterscarp. Artillery was moved nearer to the fort, so that the effect of the shelling could be better observed and the guns be aimed directly at loopholes or other special parts of the fortifications. A battery of six 12-pounder naval guns was placed near Shui-shi village, two 3·6 in. mortars at Shikou village close by, and batteries of field guns still nearer to the fort, in fact, only some 1,200 yards away.

Approaches were dug from Hackimakiyama, East and West Panlung, and Ichinobe ("P") forts against different parts of the Chinese wall to prepare for attacks on the whole *enceinte*, in order to divert the enemy's attention, and compel him to extend his comparatively small force over a large area.

At East Kikuan fort the saps were carried up the steep incline towards the "Tragedy Trench," and out to the west strong approaches and parallels were constructed towards 203 Metre Hill and its sister hill Akasakayama.

Although the whole fort line was still kept under an intermittent fairly strong artillery fire, the Japanese during this period concentrated most of their shelling, especially with the big howitzers and the 4·7 in. naval guns, on the town and harbour. The bombardment soon began to tell. Shells fell into several of the ammunition magazines, causing big explosions, and many fires broke out in the





A FIRE IN A RUSSIAN OIL STORE

IN THE FOREGROUND "PALLADA" (LEFT) AND "POBIEDA" (RIGHT). IN THE BACKGROUND THE GOLDEN HILL FORT AND THE NARROW ENTRANCE TO THE HARBOUR

town. These fires were nearly all caused by the naval guns, because their shells were provided with fuses very much more sensitive than the howitzer fuses, taking effect on striking the roofs or the walls of the houses, while the howitzer shells would go right through and only explode on meeting solid resistance.

Nearly every day we saw heavy smoke from the fires hanging over the ill-fated town. On one day in particular, a large oil store near the arsenal was struck, and a coal black mass of smoke rolling in over the town behind the hill-tops, looking as if the whole place were about to break out in flames.

A very strong fire was also directed against the ships in the harbour, forcing the smaller craft to move about, while the battleships and the cruisers found shelter under Paijushan Hill, where they were entirely hidden from view. The Japanese could therefore not observe the effect of their fire against the ships. The only thing which could help them a little was when their shells fell into the sea, throwing up immense clouds of water. From this they could judge that the ships had *not* been hit; but that was, after all, a poor consolation and not much guidance.

This question of destroying the Russian fleet soon became very serious. The Baltic fleet was on its way out. The first ships were already passing through the Suez Canal, and the others were on their way round the Cape to their common rendezvous at Madagascar. If the fleet in Port Arthur harbour, four battleships and three cruisers, besides the gunboats and the destroyers, could hold out until the Baltic fleet arrived in Japanese waters, the Russians certainly had a chance, with their combined Baltic, Port Arthur, and Vladivostock squadrons, of making matters extremely

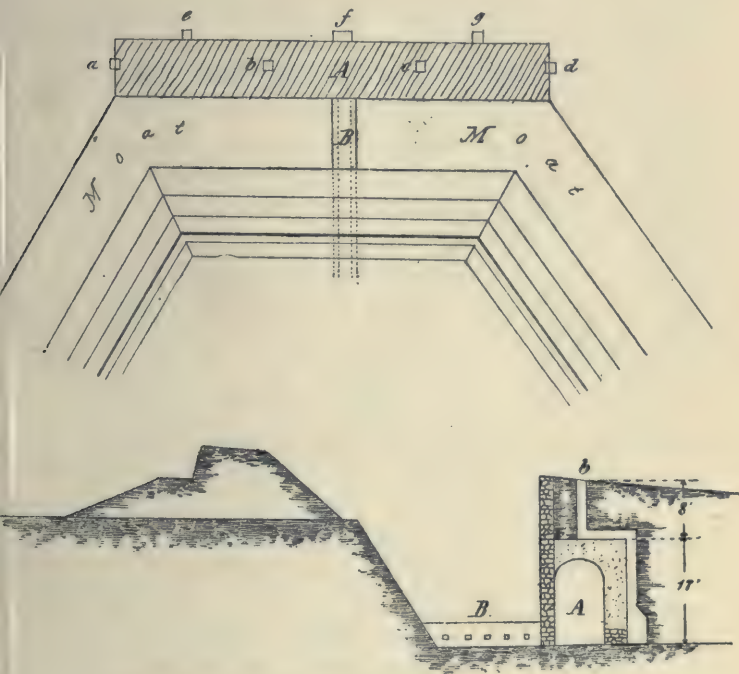
awkward for the Japanese. They could either give battle to the Japanese fleet or simply carry out, on a bigger scale, the Vladivostock squadron's tactics during June and July, making the communications between Japan and her armies unsafe, and hampering and destroying her commerce. No wonder that the navy made strong remonstrances to Tokyo, demanding that the besieging army should do its utmost to gain positions from whence the Russian fleet could be destroyed or driven out. These remonstrances became so strong a little later on, that the army here received peremptory orders to make the attack before everything was fully ready for it. But of this later.

The first problem the Japanese had to face was the crossing of the moats at Sungshuh and Erhlung forts. Their former experiences here and the lessons they were learning from the fighting in the rabbit warrens at North Kikuan fort had made them realize that the safest and easiest way would be to adopt the methods to which they had at last resorted at the latter place—namely, to dig a trench right to the bottom of the back wall of the caponiers, chisel out holes in this wall, fill them with dynamite and explode the charges. This would not only destroy the caponiers and drive out their defenders, but the *débris* from the explosion would help to fill up the moat and facilitate the passage across.

At Sungshuh fort the Japanese had discovered that the moat was provided with caponiers under the front counterscarp; but whether it extended along the whole front, as at North Kikuan, or whether there only were caponiers in the corners, they could not tell, as the central part did not show any loopholes in the masonry wall facing the moat. Neither did they know, of course, how

far back under the counterscarp the caponiers stretched.

As a matter of fact the moat defences were arranged as shown in the sketch. The caponier (*A*) extended under the whole front, with loop-holes only in the corners for enfilading the flank



THE CAPONIER ARRANGEMENT IN SUNGSHUH FORT.

moats. The caponier communicated with the interior of the fort through the concrete-built passage *B*. This rose only a few feet above the bottom of the moat, and was provided with loop-holes, from whence the front moat could be taken under enfilading fire.

All this, as I have said, the Japanese did not

know, and in order to ascertain the dimensions and the arrangement of the moat defences, they decided to sink four shafts or manholes along the front counterscarp (*a, b, c, d*). The two outer of these happened to strike just the end walls of the caponiers, while in the two central manholes the sappers struck the roof, when they had worked down about eight feet. To gain the back of the caponier it was therefore necessary to cut horizontal drifts along the roof, and then again work down to the foundations.

As soon as the dimensions of the caponier had been ascertained, three other shafts were sunk perpendicularly along the back wall (*e, f, g*), and when they had reached down to the foundations they were all connected by an underground passage. The back wall of the caponier was built of concrete about 6 ft. thick, but, curiously enough, its foundation was masonry, so that it became a comparatively easy matter to chisel out holes, about 2 ft. square and 3 ft. deep, where the dynamite charges were to be placed. The rest of the work was hard. The shafts, and especially the drifts, were very narrow. At most a couple of men, sometimes only one, could work in them at a time, and the rock was hard and difficult. Only the shaft *f* was made somewhat bigger, with a kind of winding staircase cut out of the rock, so that the men could go up and down easily with their tools and their dynamite charges; but the other manholes, when I crept through them, gave me a very vivid impression of the dangers and the unpleasantness of the old-time chimney-sweeper's profession, while the drifts along the caponier roofs made me wish that I had sent my Dachshund down in my stead,—and I am by no means a stout man.

At Erhlung fort the rock was still more difficult to work than at Sungshuh, consisting largely as it did of a very hard conglomerate of limestone, quartz, and flint. The Japanese found out that the moat was only provided with caponiers in the corners, so they decided that it would be sufficient to sink three manholes as deep as the bottom of the moat, two on the east side and one on the west side. Even this was slow, though the men worked like niggers, being relieved every hour. Diamond boring was tried, but it did not work well, and the whole of the 35 ft. deep shafts had to be chiselled out. The Russians, of course, did all in their power to impede the progress of the works. Not a night but they came out and made savage charges upon the sap-heads. In the beginning they succeeded in throwing some of their hand grenades into the manholes, doing much damage to the works and killing every man in the shafts. Later on the Japanese erected solid breastworks around these places, enabling them to generally keep the Russians off, though the casualty list remained heavy. I was told at headquarters that during this period the Japanese spent an average of ten thousand cartridges a night on these parties, and, sure enough, whatever hour of the night I woke, there was ever the sound of sniping and musketry fire to be heard, now single shots ringing out, now a rattling like rain on a roof. The sonorous booming of the guns, sometimes at many minutes' interval, sometimes many in the minute, was with us ever and always, day and night.

On November 17th the dynamite charges were placed in the back wall of the Sungshuh caponier and blasted. The explosions were only partially successful. The mines in the eastern part blew

in the concrete wall, destroyed the caponier, and filled the best part of the moat with *débris*, while those in the western part blew up through the shafts without doing much damage. The Japanese had, however, obtained possession of the front moat, and they at once set to work to construct a bomb-proof passage across, resting on a frame of heavy timber, so that, at the next attack, the men could be safely taken up to the very walls of the fort.

On November 20th the mines in the counter-scarp of Erhlung fort were exploded, the two eastern ones successfully, filling the deep moat nearly to the top, while the western here also blew up in the air. The Japanese, therefore, decided to build a bridge on heavy timber trusses at this place, while on the eastern side they commenced to construct a bomb-proof passage, as at Sungshuh fort. The bridge was finished on the 25th, but the Russians on the same day shelled it all to pieces with 6-in. shells from their battery position behind Sungshuh. The bomb-proof passage, which they could not reach, remained intact.

On November 20th we correspondents came back from an expedition to see the explosions at Erhlung fort. These from a spectacular point of view, if not in other respects, had been a great fraud. On returning, we were surprised by a visit from General Nogi.

At the entrance of the donga, where we had pitched our tents, we had put up a signboard, inviting soldiers of the army who might feel cold or thirsty to come up and have a cup of tea and warm themselves, and the invitation was largely accepted by soldiers passing this way; for about this time it was often bitterly cold. General Nogi, riding past and reading our signboard, took

his aide with him and came up to our camp, saying,—

“I have read your invitation, gentlemen. I am going to take you at your word. I am a soldier; please give me some tea.”

The General had always the right word at the right time.

He sat chatting with us for about half an hour and then left. Already whilst he sat with us the musketry fire had been more than usually heavy, and very soon after his departure it became furious. Machine guns joined in the chorus and hundreds of guns began to belch forth as heavy a fire as at any of the big attacks.

We went out again, but it was already beginning to grow dark, and it was impossible for us to say what was really taking place. It seemed like a big Russian counter-attack up towards Erhlung; the musket and the machine gun fire was all in that direction. Most of the artillery fire was Russian. Shells and shrapnel were bursting by hundreds over the Japanese parallels and the approaches leading up to Erhlung and Sungshuh forts. The fighting, whatever it was, lasted for about an hour and a half. Then suddenly it died down. Not until next morning at Headquarters could we learn what had happened and what the result had been.

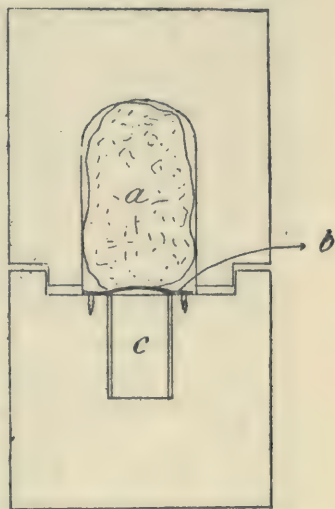
It appears that after the explosions at Erhlung had taken place the Japanese, at about 3 p.m., sent a patrol, consisting of a non-commissioned officer and two men, across the moat to report on the construction and the condition of the fortifications. They succeeded in getting across unobserved and lay down under the sandbag breastwork on the top of the parapet. They peeped over and found that they were lying in front of

the outer line of defence of the fort, and that this part was very thinly garrisoned. Further back, across an open space of about fifty yards, there was an inner, much stronger and higher work (*reduite*), where most of the garrison appeared to be. After a while the patrol was discovered and fired upon, whereupon they hurriedly scampered back to the moat.

At 5 p.m. an officer with twenty-five men was sent across to try to explore the flanks and the rear of the fort and report on the defensive arrangements of these parts. But now the Russians were on the *qui vive*. So soon as the little party attempted to cross the moat, they were instantly fired upon, and at the same time the commander of the fort, thinking that the Japanese were going to deliver an attack, telephoned for reinforcements. These came post haste, about a hundred men from the town and about fifty from Wantai, without taking much precaution to avoid being seen, only eager to be in time to help to beat off the attack. These supports were observed from the Japanese western batteries, which at once opened fire on them, and the heavy shelling from the enemy's side strengthened the Russians in their belief in an impending attack. The batteries on Paijushan, Itzeshan and Antzeshan therefore commenced a violent fire all over the Japanese approaches from which supports could be brought up. Under these circumstances it was, of course, impossible for the little reconnoitring party to achieve anything. They had to seek shelter, and after dark they withdrew. The affair was thus more or less a false alarm.

The Japanese were rather pleased. Their losses had not amounted to more than about fifty

men. They had had an opportunity of seeing what means the Russians would adopt during an attack, so that this little affair became a kind of dress rehearsal for the real assault. Finally, the Russians had wasted a large amount of ammunition, which the Japanese knew they could ill afford, for it was evident that the Russians were beginning to run short of ammunition, particularly for the heavier guns. They had been firing very little shrapnel lately, and the shells they were sending against the Japanese batteries were of a very poor description, most of them old Chinese shells re-turned and refitted to suit their own guns, and provided with fuses which in four cases out of five did not take effect. Some of these shells were opened and found to contain only a fraction of the charge they ought to hold, while the remainder of the inner chamber was filled with wood. In some cases quite an elaborate and ingenious arrangement had been made. The little charge, scarcely weighing an ounce, was placed in a raw-silk purse (a), and this again encased in a neatly turned, well varnished cylindrical wooden box, the lower part of which contained the clumsily manufactured fuse (c), kept in place by the spring (b).



IMPROVED ARRANGEMENT
FOR BURSTING CHARGES IN
RUSSIAN SHELLS.

The effect of the Russian artillery fire during this period was therefore naturally very small ; but

it was a mistake of the ever-optimistic Japanese to think that their ammunition was practically exhausted. The heavy losses which the Russian artillery inflicted on the Japanese during the ferocious fighting about the end of November and the beginning of December, particularly at 203 Metre Hill, soon made them realize that at the crucial moment their enemies had enough ammunition, and good ammunition too. What they fired in the meantime against the Japanese batteries was not so much intended to be of any considerable effect, as to keep up the *morale* of their own men.

While the operations against Sungshuh and Erhlung forts were proceeding as described, the sappers of the 11th Division were slowly carrying saps up towards the high East Kikuan fort. It had been very difficult work. The higher they progressed, the steeper became the hill, and the more difficult was it to guard their men against the shells and dynamite bombs thrown from the small mortars. Working along two approaches to about thirty yards from the "Tragedy Trench," they had here connected them by a short and strongly built siege parallel, provided with very solid bomb-proofs. From the centre of this parallel they commenced to carry forward a sap; but under the plunging fire which was poured in from the Tragedy Trench, further progress here proved practically impossible. So, after sustaining considerable losses, the attempt was given up; a very narrow and shallow trench, a couple of yards in length, being all there was to mark the brave sappers' progress.

The Japanese then decided to try to capture the Tragedy Trench by assault. They knew that the attempt most probably would cost them

many lives, and the attack was not undertaken in any lightness of spirit, like several previous ones, but because it was practically their only alternative, unless they tunnelled their way through the rock, which was far too slow a process under the circumstances, with the third general attack so near to hand.

The assault was made about six o'clock in the afternoon of the 23rd by the 12th regiment. The last parallel and the approaches nearest to it were crammed with soldiers, and large supports were kept in readiness in the other parallels.

After some very hard shelling and shrapnel fire the rush was made. The ominously empty hillside suddenly became alive with moving soldiers, who climbed upwards with feverish haste, each only armed with a rifle and a couple of hand grenades. Although as soon as they emerged from the trenches, a hailstorm of lead and splinters of steel from rifles and bursting shrapnel descended over them, and although within a few seconds the little open space between the opposing trenches was changed to a pandemonium of horrors and sufferings, and covered with mutilated corpses and wounded men writhing in pain, yet the besiegers succeeded in gaining the Tragedy Trench and in driving the defenders out.

The trench was very strongly built, and provided with bomb-proofs and traverses, affording excellent shelter against attacks from the north, the Japanese side; but against the tremendous fire opened up from the Russian positions, these defences were of little avail, and the Japanese suffered severely. It was impossible to mass any considerable force here. When, therefore, the Russians came storming in over them again with

bayonets and hand grenades, they were unable to withstand the fury of the onslaught, and were driven back to the parallel.

Later in the evening several other assaults were made, and though the Japanese each time succeeded in capturing the trench, they were as surely driven out again by the determined Russian counter-attacks. At 1 o'clock in the morning the commander of the 12th regiment decided to give up any further attempt for the nonce, and to postpone further operations till the day of the impending general attack, when the Russians would be so taken up with fighting in every direction, that they would be unable to concentrate their efforts on any particular spot.

So the Russians remained masters of the field. In the hard-fought-for trenches Russian and Japanese corpses lay in heaps, pitifully intermingled, and the open space in front of the trench was black with killed and badly-wounded men. Within a couple of days all were dead. To attempt to remove the wounded was quite out of the question, and so all perished. For the second time the "Tragedy Trench" had proved rightly named. It was not to be the last time.

CHAPTER XIX

THE THIRD GENERAL ATTACK

ABOUT the middle of November Marshal Oyama, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Armies, sent his Quartermaster-General, General Fukushima, and his Chief-of-Staff, General Kodama, to the investing army in front of Port Arthur to report on the apparently unsatisfactory condition of affairs at this theatre of operations. As I pointed out in the foregoing chapter, the advent of the Baltic Fleet as a new factor in the game of war made it imperative that the fortress should be captured without delay, or at least that positions should be taken to enable the Japanese to destroy the Russian fleet at Port Arthur, or compel the ships to leave the harbour. It is probable that the two distinguished officers were sent here to push things forward and see that everything possible was done to this end. At the next attack, the Japanese must continue their assaults without stop or respite, even if the fighting should last for weeks, until this goal had been attained or until their last man had perished in the attempt.

The October attack proved that the besieging army was not sufficiently strong to carry out this programme or perhaps that the *morale* of the men had suffered under the long-drawn-out struggle, so that they had lost that indomitable, nearly super-

human courage which so distinguished them during the first part of the campaign.

There are many indications that the latter conjecture is the correct one.

After the unsuccessful attacks on the Tragedy Trench on November 23rd the 12th regiment, which had borne the brunt of the fighting here, had to be withdrawn and replaced by another.

At the attack on December 18th against North Kikuan fort the 22nd regiment, which had fought its way against this stronghold from the very beginning, and which was designed to make the ultimate assault, was, at the very last moment, ordered back by the divisional commander, and a new regiment was sent forward, because the General "read fear in their faces," according to his own expression.

When the officers who took part in the attacks on Sungshuh, Erhlung, and North Kikuan forts on November 26th tried to tell me of this terrible fight, they described how the inner of the forts had been constructed as a maze of sandbag bomb-proofs, and how in the narrow passages and ingeniously prepared *culs de sac* they got lost, and were mowed down by the rifles and machine guns of their invisible foes; or how a Russian force, which had been concealed in some dark narrow side-passage, charged down upon them with bayonets and hand grenades. This tale, though I heard it from several persons, seemed at once to be most improbable. I could not conceive how such a "maze" of sandbag breastworks and bomb-proofs, if they ever had existed, had been able to resist the furious bombardment which was poured in over the forts for many hours just before the attacks. I thought that such improvised arrangements must have been shelled to wrack and

ruin and made absolutely useless for such purposes as mentioned. Later investigations on the spot and conversations with several Russian officers who took part in these fights have convinced me that no such inner defences ever existed. There were sandbag breastworks on the ramparts and bomb-proofs under the banquettes. In North Kikuan fort there was a sandbag entrenchment at the rear of the fort, and in Erhlung there was a covered communication between the upper and the lower battery, but all tales of a "maze" are simply due to the over-excited imagination of the men who took part in the fighting.

These examples, which show how the Japanese in front of Port Arthur were beginning to lose their nerve under the terrible strain, could be multiplied, but I shall restrict myself to mention a single other case.

After the capture of North Kikuan fort the Japanese garrison here and the sappers who worked up towards "Q" fort, suffered very severely from rifle and machine gun fire without being able to make out from where the fire emanated. Some of it, they knew, came from "Q" fort, some from the Chinese wall, but the position of these fortifications was not such that it could account for the galling fire to which they were exposed. They imagined that there must be a marvellously well masked position somewhere between North Kikuan and "Q" forts, and as they were not able to locate it, and it began to inspire them with a kind of supernatural awe, they gave the imaginary position the name of the "Ghost Trench." This is, of course, nothing out of the common; but here comes the extraordinary part. Directly after the fort had been captured,

the Japanese drew a plan of it, showing at the same time the position of the "Q" fort *and* the Ghost Trench, and we were even, a few days later, told that this trench had now been captured.

The day after the capitulation of Port Arthur I walked all over the forts and the trenches in the Eastern section of the fortress. I came to "Q" fort and went across the open field down to North Kikuan fort; but of any trench here or anywhere near there was not a vestige. It was indeed a "Ghost" trench, created in the disturbed brains of men with highly-strung nerves.

This state of affairs had become apparent to the Japanese themselves. They saw that to gain the much desired end it would be necessary to infuse new blood, to evoke competition, play on the old clan jealousies, and to shift the regiments about a bit so that they should not always have to operate against the same positions where they had suffered and been beaten back time after time, and which to their minds therefore had come to stand as something terrible, uncanny and awe-inspiring.

Already on October 20th, the 10th brigade of the second reserve had arrived from Japan and had been detailed to reinforce the 11th Division. On November 17th the 7th Army Division arrived in Dalny and marched to Shuangtaikou, eight miles to the rear of the Japanese lines.

This division consisted of young fresh troops direct from home. It was recruited from the Hokaido districts and has always been considered one of the best and bravest of the whole Japanese army. It was the only division which had not, so far, taken any part in the war; remaining at home while their comrades were out fighting for their country and decking themselves with honour. It is easy to imagine with what feelings they had

read and heard of the feats of the other divisions while they had remained inactive, eating their hearts out. But at last relief had come. The Emperor had entrusted to them the glorious task of taking Port Arthur, the only place where their comrades had been baulked. At last their opportunity had arrived.

The troops were not taken at once to the front but were kept back at Shuangtaikou until actually needed. They were not allowed to have any communication with the other troops, who might fill them with tales of the formidable fortress, the terrible fights, the hardships, the sufferings, the cruel sights—with unbiassed minds and full of eagerness and enthusiasm should they come to the front, and their young, long pent-up force should run like a warm current through the whole battle-worn army and fill it with fresh energy.

With these reinforcements the besieging army had been brought up to nearly 100,000 men all told, and included twenty-four regiments of infantry, and with this formidable body the Japanese renewed their attacks on the fortress.

The Japanese plan was, as already stated, to make simultaneous attacks on the uncaptured positions along the northern *enceinte* of the eastern section, namely, the Sungshuh, Erhlung, North Kikuan, "Q," and East Kikuan forts, and also against certain portions of the covered way. The area of operations on November 6th was, then, exactly the same as during the second general attack in October. The regiments which went to assault the different positions were, with one exception, the same, and the whole fighting, from beginning to end, proceeded in much the same way, developing into a series of separate, independent assaults:

As at all previous attacks, the Japanese commenced operations by a long and heavy bombardment. Although their many experiences must have made it clear to them that this introductory bombardment was of very little effect against the Russian fortifications, and, as a matter of fact, only served as a kind of warning to the enemy to have everything in readiness for their reception, they did not think of changing their tactics. In matters military the Japanese are very orthodox.

Though not so crushingly heavy as in October, the preliminary bombardment was very violent, and lasted from dawn until about 1 p.m., when the infantry advance began. During the last two hours nearly all the firing was shrapnel; the "Big Babies" played only a very subordinate rôle compared with what they had done during the second general attack.

The third general attack commenced on November 26th with an attempt to carry the *enceinte* forts in the eastern section. It was repulsed after fifteen hours of continuous fighting of the fiercest description, with very severe losses, the heaviest the Japanese ever suffered in a single day before Port Arthur. At the two previous attacks, though they were repulsed, the Japanese had retained certain minor advantages. At the first they had captured the two Panlung forts, at the second they had got possession of "P" fort and Kobu fort; but at the third general attack they were beaten back everywhere without gaining a single step forward in any direction. And yet, such was the strategical situation, with the Baltic fleet throwing a threatening shadow, that the Japanese had to continue. The capture of the fortress at the present juncture became of secondary consideration; the destruction of the fleet

in the harbour was all-important, and as the door had been slammed so forcibly in their faces in the eastern section, they would have to try their luck in another direction. From November 27th the general attack therefore condensed itself into a tremendous effort to capture a single important position, the famous nine days' fight for 203 Metre Hill.

Although the fighting went on with practically no interruption from November 26th to December 6th, the first day's attack forms an absolutely independent part of the operations, and must be treated separately.

The infantry attacks were received at first with a terrible fire from rifles and machine guns. The fighting soon developed into a series of hand-to-hand encounters. With the enemy so close, it is difficult for the defender to keep calm and to aim correctly. It becomes intolerable to him to remain quiet and self-possessed; the strain is too great. He must, *must* get to close quarters with his enemy, although he knows that his rifle is a much more destructive weapon than his bayonet.

Early in the afternoon the force in front of Sungshuh fort had been largely increased. At about two o'clock the first assault was made. Through the bomb-proof passage they crossed the moat and gained the parapet of the rampart, which in a moment became black with moving men. Into this seething mass of humanity the machine guns of the forts and the batteries on Antzeshan poured such a tremendous fire that the attackers were mowed down, crushed, dispersed, and sent head over heels back to the moat again in less than a minute, before a single man had reached the interior of the fort. The

same fate befell a fresh attempt undertaken at five o'clock. After dark a number of men succeeded in crossing the bullet-swept zone, and reached the *terre-plein* of the fort. The Russians met them hand-to-hand, and a terrible encounter ensued, lasting for nearly two hours, fought with the fiercest savagery. There was no wavering nor weakness on either side. A single thought filled the minds of the men :

Kill ! kill ! kill !

Hoarse, grunting sounds as from wild animals ; clang of steel ; cracking of rifles and the sudden crash of bursting grenades ; moanings of wounded men writhing in pain ; reeking of blood ; acrid smell of perspiration of men in excitement ; sweet, sickly vapours of dynamite and pyroxyline, and the smell of powder, which to a man is like spurs to a horse, and goads him right on unto death.

Kill ! kill ! kill !

Hurl thy hand grenade into the thick of thy enemies ! Nothing equals it for mangling, mutilating, tearing to pieces. Limbs and heads and pieces of flesh fly about, and the warm blood spurts in thy face.

Kill ! kill ! kill !

Thrust thy bayonet, bury thy blade deep in quivering flesh ; grasp the barrel of thy rifle with powerful hands, swing it over thy head and brain thine enemy with a crushing blow. Tear him with nails, bite him with teeth, and strangle him with sinewy fingers.

Kill ! kill ! kill !

For two hours the struggle lasted ; then the two parties, tired to death, separated silently as by a mutual agreement, and withdrew, the Russians to the rear of the fort, the Japanese to trenches which their sappers meanwhile had

dug on the banquette. From these positions the firing was continued, but no further attempt was made from either side to drive the enemy out. The following night the Japanese, finding their position in the interior of the fort untenable, withdrew to the moat again.

At Erhlung Fort the fighting was of a still more ferocious character, and lasted, with few and brief interruptions, the whole day, and on until three o'clock in the morning. As will be seen from the plan, Appendix VI., the interior of the fort consists of a lower and higher battery, the lower armed with field pieces, the inner with 15 cm. guns and machine guns. The Japanese plan was to make their main attack from the moat over the ramparts of the lower battery, but at the same time they dispatched a force up through the deep donga between Erhlung and Hachimaki-yama to work their way, partly through saps which had been constructed here, to the rear of the fort, and attempt another attack from this side. For a long time this force was kept at bay by a galling fire from the Chinese wall, and when, at last, their thinned ranks succeeded in breaking through and reaching the road which leads from Sungshuh along the rear of the fort line, they were met with such a furious fire from the battery positions on New Panlung, and the so-called Sungshuh supporting fort, that practically the whole of the detachment was wiped out.

The attacks delivered in the afternoon across the ramparts were beaten back, to be resumed again about ten o'clock the same night. Here, as elsewhere, most of the fighting was hand-to-hand, though the rattle of rifles and machine guns in this direction at times was terrific. After two hours of the fiercest fighting the

Russians were driven out from the lower level of the fort. At midnight the Japanese made a desperate attempt to storm the upper battery; but the assailants were mown down by machine guns so soon as they appeared on the parapet, and hand grenades and shells tore cruel gaps in their ranks. Supports after supports were sent up, only to be mown down in their turn, and when at last the fighting slackened in the small hours of the morning, the Japanese had been forced back to their improvised trenches in the front part of the works, leaving the whole *terre-plein* between the upper and lower battery strewn with dead bodies, in some places piled six or eight high. At Erhlung, as at Sungshuh, the Japanese on the following night retired to the moat again. During the latter portion of the night the artillery on both sides took an active part in the fighting, the Japanese batteries bombarding the upper, the Russian the lower part of the fort. Here, as along their whole line of attack, the Japanese guided the fire from their batteries by small white lights, showing how far up against the different positions they had gained. Special signals were made by lighting red Bengal fires. Most of the Russian signalling was made with their searchlights.

Besides the attacks against the Chinese wall to the rear of Hachimaki-yama which I have already mentioned, the Japanese tried at two other places to break through this line of defence, namely, behind "P" fort and behind East Panlung. At the former place two assaults were made; but both broke down under the terrible fire at close range. At East Panlung no less than four rushes were made, three of them were crushed under the withering fire; at the fourth

the assailants succeeded in breaking through, and a force of 200 men was sent forward against the slopes of Wantai hill. They reached the neck; but here, as elsewhere, the Russians had a warm reception awaiting them. From "H" fort and from Wantai supports rushed down upon them, and a sweeping fire from machine guns was showered down from two sides. Of the little party not one returned to tell his comrades what the country on the other side of the ridge was like. After this, all further attempts to break through were abandoned, and the Japanese established themselves in trenches but a few yards away from the Chinese wall at the places where their attacks had been made, both sides keeping up a continuous hand-grenade fire.

At North Kikuan fort the attack shaped much in the same way as at Sungshuh and Erhlung. The fighting here was also of the fiercest description, chiefly with bayonets and hand grenades. Five assaults were made over the ramparts. In the narrow space in the interior of the fort the lines of fighting men swayed backwards and forwards, as one or other party momentarily gained the upper hand; but in the end the result was always the same. The Russians stood their ground with the most admirable fortitude, and fought where they stood till they were cut down; supports were kept in readiness in the gorge of the fort to fill the gaps in the ranks, and in spite of all their gallantry the Japanese every time were beaten back, leaving hundreds of men on the field; but in the heaps of dead and dying, crammed into the little space, there was a fair sprinkling of Russians. With dead bodies of brave men the dam had been built which stopped the Japanese avalanche.

R



At East Kikuan some of the most sanguinary encounters of the day took place during the fights for the Tragedy Trench. As I have mentioned, the 12th regiment, which made the attacks on November 23rd and was repulsed with great losses, had been taken out of the fighting line and placed in reserve, and the 27th regiment of the newly-arrived 7th Division had been put in their stead. The Trench was taken and retaken three times at the point of the bayonet; the intervening space between the Trench and the last Japanese parallel, which was strewn with corpses after the previous attacks in October and November, once more reaped a rich harvest. The next morning this piece of ground looked, at a distance, as if covered with a black carpet of dead bodies. Probably no spot on earth of the same dimensions is so saturated with the blood of brave men as this little part of the East Kikuan hillside.

At about nine o'clock in the evening, as we sat watching the fighting and listening to the sounds of musketry and machine guns, trying to form an idea of the progress of the attack, our attention was suddenly drawn to one of the Russian search-lights down in the lower part of Shuishi valley which began to behave in a most peculiar and eccentric manner. It went out and flashed forth again with infinitesimal intervals, flickering and beckoning deliriously; then it suddenly became fixed, throwing its cone of light in the direction of the Shuishi lunettes; but after a little while it again commenced twinkling and scintillating, its rays moving about in every direction in a most erratic way; and then it suddenly went out altogether.

Shortly after we heard a heavy fire open up in the direction of Sungshuh Fort, which speedily

increased in vehemence and soon became of terrific intensity. We conjectured that the wild beckoning and winking of the searchlight had been a signal to draw the attention of the Russians to some unexpected move on the part of the Japanese. And so it proved to be. General Nogi, in connection with the frontal attacks against the eastern section, had planned a turning movement to capture the strong battery position behind Sungshuh Fort, which the Japanese call the supporting fort of Sungshuh, by an attack from the west side. Should they succeed in the enterprise, the Japanese would thus be established in the rear of the Russian lines; they would be able to fire directly into Sungshuh and Erhlung forts, making them untenable, and no move could therefore be more calculated to bring about the speedy fall of the whole fortress.

To carry out this plan, General Nogi had formed a detachment of 2,000 volunteers, all picked men, chosen from the different regiments making up the Japanese right wing, and the command of this force he had entrusted to the brave leader of the 2nd Brigade, Major-General Nakamura. The troops had been drawn up in the two southern Shuishi lunettes and the connecting trenches. From here they were to advance down the steep incline to the lower part of Shuishi valley, cross this, and work their way up the gorge between Sungshuh and the supporting fort.

I quote below General Nakamura's instructions to his troops, both because they give a clear indication of the importance which the Japanese attached to this move and because the concluding words corroborate my remarks in the beginning of this chapter.

"The object of our detachment is to cut the Port Arthur fortress into two. No man must hope to return alive. Should I fall, Colonel Watanabe will take my place, and should a similar fate befall him, Lieutenant-Colonel Okuno will take charge. Every officer of whatever rank shall appoint his successor. The attack shall be chiefly effected with the bayonet. However severe the enemy's fire, our men must not return a single shot until we have established a footing. The officers are authorized to kill those men who, without proper reason, straggle behind or separate themselves from the ranks, or retreat." (Trans. *Japan Times*.)

At nine o'clock, just as the moon was rising, the detachment started on its adventurous undertaking towards the enemy's positions. The Russian forts and batteries loomed up, large and black and threatening in the faint, fantastic light, in front and on both flanks. To the left the battle was raging, and over the heads of the detachment shells and shrapnel from the western batteries sped zishing past. The column wended its way forward in the deepest silence. It reached the valley below unobserved; then suddenly it was struck by the rays of a searchlight, which slowly passed backwards and forwards, exploring the field. For a few moments the light remained immovably fixed on the troops, as if paralyzed; then, as the glimmering of the bayonets revealed a large force of the enemy close to their own lines, it became frantic, sending its mute cry of distress, in short, rapid gleams, all over the horizon. Its appeal was seen and read. A tremendous artillery fire opened from all sides upon the detachment, and when it ventured into the gorge, and commenced climbing the steep

slopes up to the supporting fort, strong Russian reserves, gathered there, poured a withering fire into the attacking party, and then rushed down upon them, and engaged them in a desperate, hand-to-hand struggle. Both sides fought like demons, especially the Russians, who on this day attacked with unparalleled bravery. Nothing could stand against their furious assault. General Nakamura was seriously wounded, Lieutenant-Colonel Okuba was killed, and over a thousand men were placed *hors de combat*. After nearly three hours of the fiercest combat, when all hopes of success had to be abandoned, General Nogi, at one o'clock in the morning, recalled the detachment.

CHAPTER XX

203 METRE HILL

NOVEMBER 26th had been a disastrous day for the Japanese. Ten thousand of their brave soldiers lay killed or severely wounded on the bleak hillsides or in the forts and trenches where the battle had raged, and their hospitals were crowded with men, torn, mangled, and mutilated by the horrible wounds which bayonets, hand grenades and rifle bullets fired at close range inflict. And all these sacrifices had not brought them a step nearer to their goal.

Their entire centre and most of the right and left wings had been engaged in the attack, and the troops were tired out after the fifteen hours of continuous terrible fighting. A deep despondency, a dark gloom had settled over the whole army. The weather was misty and sultry and seemed to fit in well with the mood of the besiegers, and the strange quietness, the morose silence, which reigned throughout the Japanese lines seemed doubly oppressive after the uproar and ear-splitting of the preceding day.

At headquarters this feeling of despondency and dejection was even more pronounced than amongst the troops. Their calculations and estimates had again proved wrong, their methods unavailing, their plans a failure. I had a distinct feeling that they were inclined to do as they had been doing

after the other unsuccessful attacks, give themselves three or four weeks of more thorough preparation for a fresh assault, resting their men and trying to build up their self-confidence again. But this time they had to go on. The orders from Tokyo were peremptory, and Generals Fukushima and Kodama were there to see that they were executed vigorously. It had become too evident that it was hopeless to persevere along the lines they had tried to force their way on the 26th; they would have to try in other directions. They understood that they must give up for the present every idea of bringing about the speedy fall of the fortress, and must confine themselves to capturing positions from which the Russian fleet could be destroyed. Once they realized this, there was no doubt where their efforts must be concentrated. The only dominating position within possible reach and at reasonable range from the harbour was the high 203 Metre Hill, which they had already unsuccessfully attacked in September.

This hill is the highest eminence on the large plateau which rises up to the north of the harbour and extends nearly to Louisa Bay. Situated about midway on the western edge of the plateau, it is about three miles distant from Paijushan hill, under the shelter of which the Russian men-of-war lay at anchor, and from its top a most excellent bird's-eye view of the harbour, the new town and parts of the old town can be obtained.

The possession of 203 Metre Hill would give the Japanese other advantages also. It completely dominates the forts on the eastern edge of the plateau, and with guns placed on its top, the Japanese would be able to fire right into the open gorge of Antzeshan and demolish the batteries there. The lower fortified hills and advanced

positions in front of the eastern and southern forts on the plateau would be untenable, and their defenders could be driven back behind the ramparts of the forts without difficulty, so that the sapping operations could be very much restricted. In other words, 203 Metre Hill was the key of the whole western section of defences and therefore the natural point of attack, on which the Japanese would have to concentrate all their forces and all their energy.

203 Metre Hill is a very strong position from nature's hand. Separated from the nearest lower hills by deep, narrow gorges, it lifts its lofty peaks high above the surrounding country. The lower parts of the hill are fairly easy slopes; but higher up the sides are in many places bulging and precipitous, and exceedingly hard to climb. To the north-east a short neck connects 203 with the considerably lower Akasaka-yama, which also was strongly fortified, and by its enfilading position to the main hill was of the greatest assistance to the defenders. Provided with strong permanent fortifications, these hills would have been practically impregnable. The Russians either had no eye for their great importance, or had not the time or means to build proper forts here; but even with the defence works of semi-permanent character, the natural strength of the position was such that it took the Japanese nine days of almost continuous fighting, and cost them over 8,000 men to gain possession of it. It was only when they had spent over 4,000 of their big howitzer shells in completely wrecking the trenches, that they were able to capture the place. With forts strong enough to withstand such fire—as, for instance, Erhlung and the other permanent forts on the eastern ridge—it is not

improbable that the Japanese would have utterly failed to carry the position by assault, and to tunnel their way up through the hard rock to it, even if everything went well, would have taken them many months.

On each of the peaks a small fort was built, and round the front and the flanks of the hill a double row of trenches extended, defended by strong wire entanglements. Forts and trenches were constructed in the same manner. On posts of heavy timber a roof of 8 in. by 14 in. beams was laid, covered with large $\frac{1}{2}$ in. steel plates; on top of this a thick layer of sandbags and earth. The strong sandbag breastworks reached right up to the roof, and the loopholes were protected by $\frac{1}{2}$ in. steel plates, about 12 in. square, with a cross-shaped opening punched out for the rifle. At the two forts the corners were strengthened by rails. Strong bomb-proofs were built behind the crest of the hill, where a considerable number of reserves could be kept in readiness, and, from these, strong and wide bomb-proof passages led up to each of the forts. The defences of Akasakayama were constructed in the same manner.

The Japanese sappers had very hard work in front of 203. Down the slopes of the hill on the other side of the narrow valley the approaches had to be dug very deep and wide, and provided with extraordinarily strong breastworks to withstand the heavy shelling and shrapnelling which the big guns on Taiyangkou and Laotiehshan could direct against them. At the bottom of the



STEEL PLATE WITH
CROSS-SHAPED OPEN-
ING FOR THE RIFLE
USED FOR LOOP-
HOLES IN SANDBAG
TRENCHES.

250 THE SIEGE OF PORT ARTHUR

valley the Japanese could, for a short distance, make use of a deep donga, but up the steep sides of 203, where the soil was very hard and the fire from the trenches and Akasaka-yama extremely harassing, it had been most laborious and perilous work. One line of approaches had been constructed towards the south-western peak, and this reached to close under the lower trenches. Against the north-eastern peak two approaches had been dug; but, being more exposed to the enfilading fire from Akasaka-yama, the progress



here had been slower, so that on November 27th the sap-heads were still about 175 yards distant from the fort on the peak. The saps leading up towards Akasaka-yama were also far from finished. The Japanese knew that they were not ready for an attack, and it was a curious freak of fate that they now, after so many bitter experiences had taught them the folly of premature attacks, should be forced, by outside pressure and against their own better judgment, to undertake another.

The attacks commenced at 7 p.m. on November 27th, and continued day and night with

unabated fury till the 30th, with varying luck, but with the final result that the Russians remained in possession of the peaks and the rear of the hills, while the Japanese were driven back to their parallels and approaches again. The double rows of trenches were unoccupied by either of the opponents; they had been completely levelled to the ground by the Japanese 11 in. shells.

During the first four days of December there were continuous scrimmages, and many smaller attacks and counter-attacks, but no properly organized assaults on a large scale were carried out, the Japanese mainly occupying themselves with completing their sapping arrangements. Against the south-western peak the approaches were carried up past the two rows of trenches to a point which on the sketch I have marked A. From here they had a splendid view of the town and the harbour, and to gain and retain this little piece of ground the Japanese had had to fight with the greatest doggedness, making most appalling sacrifices. They were now assiduously working to fortify the place, so that the Russians would be unable to drive them out again. Even if they failed to capture the whole position, they meant to stick to these few square yards of the hillside with all their might. That was, as a matter of fact, all they really needed—room for a couple of men, or even a single man, with a telephone, to observe and direct the Japanese fire against the town and the enemy's warships.

In the afternoon of December 5th their sapping arrangements were completed, and the Japanese made their ultimate assault on 203 Metre Hill. After twelve hours of the fiercest fighting, the hill was stormed and carried at four o'clock in the morning of the 6th. Strong demonstrations

against the eastern forts prevented the Russians from drawing reinforcements from this section, so practically the same troops had been under fire the whole time at 203. Their losses had been very serious—over 4000 killed and wounded—and the long, bitter fighting had at last tired them out and made them break down under the fearful strain.

To describe in detail all the different assaults and rushes, and all the Russian counter-attacks, would be of little interest. They nearly all proceeded in the same manner. The brunt of the fighting was borne by the 1st, the 15th, and the 38th regiments of the second reserve. After the first twenty-four hours troops of the newly-arrived 7th Division were sent forward in steadily-increasing numbers until the whole division was engaged. It must have been a terrible experience for these young men, who had never seen fighting before, to be sent against these formidable positions on steep, wire-defended hillsides, where their comrades lay in hundreds and thousands, cruelly mangled and mutilated, where the ground was slippery with blood, and where the most ghastly and revolting sights met them at every step. For at 203 Metre Hill and Akasaka-yama the struggle was more terrible, on account of the extensive use of high explosive shells and bombs, than at any other place in front of Port Arthur, and the men fought more desperately and with more ferocious savagery, not only because both sides fully comprehended the importance of capturing or retaining the position, but also because the horrible, inhuman means of destruction which were employed by both sides reacted on the minds of the men, making them wild and brutal, like savage beasts.

Several times the Japanese succeeded in taking parts of the hill, but each time they were driven out again by a Russian counter-attack, delivered with the most furious energy, hand grenades being used as the principal weapon. Twice for a short time they gained possession of the whole hill, but on the first occasion a strong body of sailors, advancing with shouts of "hurrah," and with bayonets fixed, made the Japanese take to their heels without awaiting the charge; and the next time, so soon as the Russians had evacuated the position, such a deluge of large shells was poured in over the hill, especially from Taiyangkou and also from Antzeshan, Itzeshan, Lao-tiehshan, and the other battery positions, that it became impossible for the Japanese to remain there. They had to retreat to their saps, whereupon the Russians again returned.

The Japanese, on their side, bombarded the hill with their big howitzers with, if possible, a still greater fury. As I have mentioned, over 4,000 shots were fired from them, and the effect of these huge shells and violent charges against the semi-permanent fortifications was tremendous. The fuses of these shells do not take effect until they strike hard ground; consequently they went right through the earth and the sandbags on top of the bomb-proofs, and did not explode until they struck the steel plates. The effect was then so violent that it broke or flung aside the heavy plates, shattering the heavy timbers and throwing them about in every direction. During the attacks on the 28th the Japanese carried with them buckets of kerosene, with which they saturated the timber and the sandbags of the bomb-proofs, and set fire to them; but when the attacks had been repulsed the Russians again occupied the

trenches, and stayed in the ruins in spite of the heat and the smoke.

At Akasaka-yama, where the attacks were mostly carried out by the 7th Division, the Japanese could not make any more headway than at its larger sister hill, and the history of the fighting here forms a nearly perfect counterpart of the events at 203 Metre Hill, consisting of a series of attacks and counter-attacks, where hand grenades and high explosive shells played the principal *rôle*.

The enfilading position of the hill was of very material assistance to the Russians in helping to beat off the attacks on 203. On November 28th, for instance, a force of about 400 Japanese had been drawn together in the parallel B, where they were completely sheltered against the fire from any part of 203, and where they thought themselves in perfect safety. But the Russian sailors on Akasaka-yama placed two machine guns in positions where they could fire directly into the parallel, and, before they had been discovered by the Japanese, suddenly opened fire. The Japanese were sitting huddled together in the narrow space, quite unconcernedly, when the avalanche of lead was poured into them. Within a few seconds the trench was turned into a veritable pandemonium, a seething mass of humanity, where men were fighting wildly to get away, trampling on the wounded, climbing over the piles of corpses which blocked the entrance, or trying to escape over the edge of the parallel down the coverless hillside. But the Maxims did their work as only Maxims can. Within a few moments practically the whole force was wiped out; a few men were shot dead as they ran down the hillside, but nearly all the others were killed in the narrow trench. It took

the Japanese days to extricate and carry away the fearfully intermingled corpses.

But though the machine guns took an important part in the fighting, and though rifles and even bayonets had their fair share in the slaughter, the battle at 203 Metre Hill was essentially a hand grenade and a high explosive shell fight, a triumph, an apotheosis, of dynamite, pyroxyline and melinite. At close range the men discarded their rifles and relied solely on their hand grenades, and with very good reason, it seems to me; for the power of these modern infernal machines is immense, infusing terror and dread in the hearts of the bravest.

I walked over the battlefield a few days after the final capture of the position and had an opportunity of seeing and judging for myself.

Through the deep saps, over which an occasional Russian shrapnel still was flying, I walked the first part of the way; but down in the trench I could see nothing, so I scrambled out and climbed along the hillside. On the lower slopes most of the corpses had been carried away, and I had walked up nearly half-way to the top before I got warning of what was in store for me.

The first thing that put me on my guard was an ordinary Japanese soldier's cap lying on the ground. I picked it up; it felt heavy. I looked closer at it and let it drop again immediately; it was filled with the scalp and half the brains of the man who had worn it.

Shortly afterwards I reached a small ditch in front of the lower wire entanglements, which had been razed to the ground by the shelling, with the wire curled up and intertwined in a shapeless heap. A pile of some fifteen or twenty corpses had been blown together here. Evidently the men had been seeking shelter in the shallow ditch for a short

time, trying to regain breath before they started on their last climb to the trenches. A dynamite grenade had been hurled in amongst them and killed all, and now they lay here so mixed up that it was difficult to make out what part belonged to one man and what to another. The force of the explosion had torn every scrap of clothing off their bodies, but had not, as might have been expected, scorched them to any considerable degree; only their shoes or boots and their socks remained on their feet, and in one or two cases I saw the leather belt still strapped round the waist of a man, while all his garments had been blown away.

Not one of these corpses but had at least one vital part of the body torn off; most had an arm or a leg wrenched away; some had the chest or stomach ripped open, some the head severed at the neck; one head had rolled only a few paces off and was staring with a hideous grin. And all these corpses or parts of corpses had been blown together in a heap four or five feet high in the most hopeless confusion. Out of this pyramid arms and legs protruded and from the top an arm and a hand with fingers outstretched pointed heavenwards as if in a mute appeal.

More to the south, close under the wire entanglements the bodies lay not in tens or in dozens, but in hundreds, generally in small clusters of some fifteen or twenty men; the effect of each separate hand grenade or shell which had been flung in amongst the attacking party, sweeping them together in small heaps, looking like a human *ragôut* of mutilated bodies and odd limbs in a sauce of blood and brains and intestines. The faces of the corpses, where not mutilated beyond recognition, nearly all wore an expression

of unspeakable horror, and altogether the sight was gruesome and ghastly beyond description.

Many dead bodies lay about singly on the hillside, and odd limbs were strewn about everywhere. A peculiar and most uncanny thing was that the effective zone of the explosives was so sharply defined. I saw men with the head or an arm or leg wrenched off, while the rest of the body was perfectly intact. The head of one soldier had been cut in two from the crown to the chin as with a saw, leaving the right half absolutely untouched, while the left had completely disappeared.

This was the work of a high explosive shell. These very often burst into thin knife-shaped fragments which come whizzing through the air with enormous force, and such a fragment must have caused this poor fellow's death. I saw another man, who must have been struck full by a shell, cut in two at the waist; the upper part of his body was lying there perfectly unmarked; of the lower part nothing remained, not a vestige.

The trenches, as I mentioned, were completely razed to the ground; only a series of mounds of softer earth, intermixed with scarred bits of timber and shreds of burnt sandbags gave any indication of the site of these defence works. Out of the débris, parts of bodies and limbs protruded everywhere, proving how tenaciously the defenders had stuck to their positions and how undauntedly the Japanese had attacked. Many hundreds of brave men were buried in these shallow graves, which the Russians had dug, and the Japanese shells had filled in again over the dead bodies.

The sights which met me everywhere on the battlefield had been gruesome enough; but what I saw in the hospitals was ten times worse and

still haunts my dreams. For the men who lay on the hill-sides or in the trenches of 203 suffered no longer ; their deaths, though terrible, had been sudden and easy. But the survivors, those whom the shock did not kill on the spot, these remnants of men who suffered agonies for weeks before released by death, or those others who may live or rather exist for years, mended and patched up by skilful surgeons into a semblance of living beings, without arms, without legs, very often blind, with their bodies torn and their whole system thoroughly shattered by the fearful shock, those are the men to be pitied. I saw—well, never mind—

CHAPTER XXI

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

THE capture of 203 Metre Hill was well worth the sacrifices it had cost the Japanese, and their dogged perseverance and their stupendous efforts were richly rewarded by the vast results that followed. Not only did the possession of the hill make it possible for them to destroy the Russian fleet in the harbour, and not only did the capture of this key of the western defences, as the Japanese had calculated, bring about the fall of a series of minor defence works, but this first real success in front of Port Arthur had a very salutary effect on the spirits of the whole army, and restored to them that confidence which the long terrible strain and the constant reverses during the last four months had badly shaken.

The capture of 203 was the real turning point of the siege. From now onwards the Japanese advance was irresistible. Though the Russians till for a couple of weeks put up a good fight and defended every inch of ground with their customary stubbornness, position after position fell into the hands of their assailants, until they decided to give up the hopeless struggle and surrender.

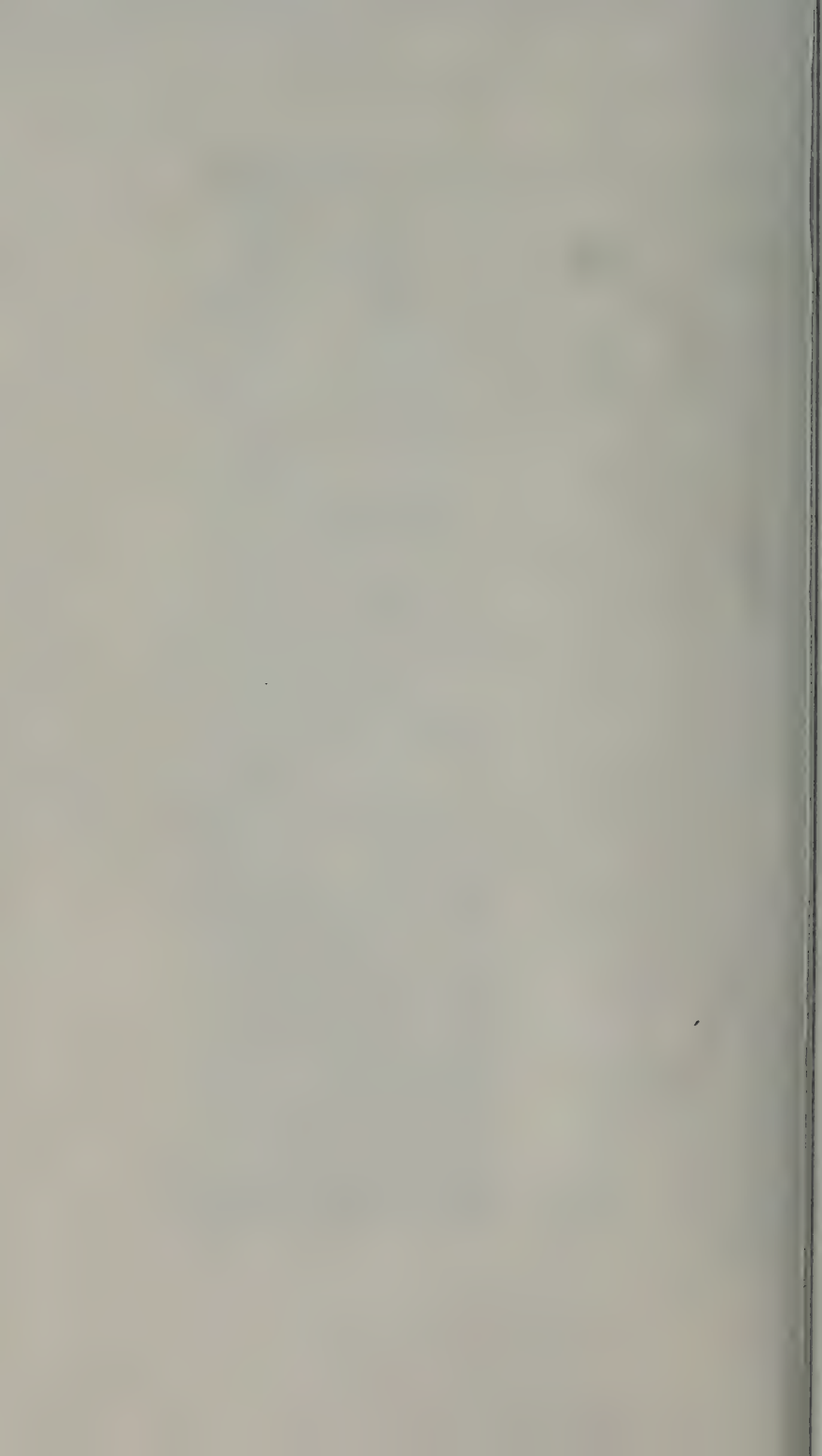
Directly after the Russians had been driven away from 203 Metre Hill, the batteries on Tiger's Tail, Taiyangkon, Golden Hill, Paijushan

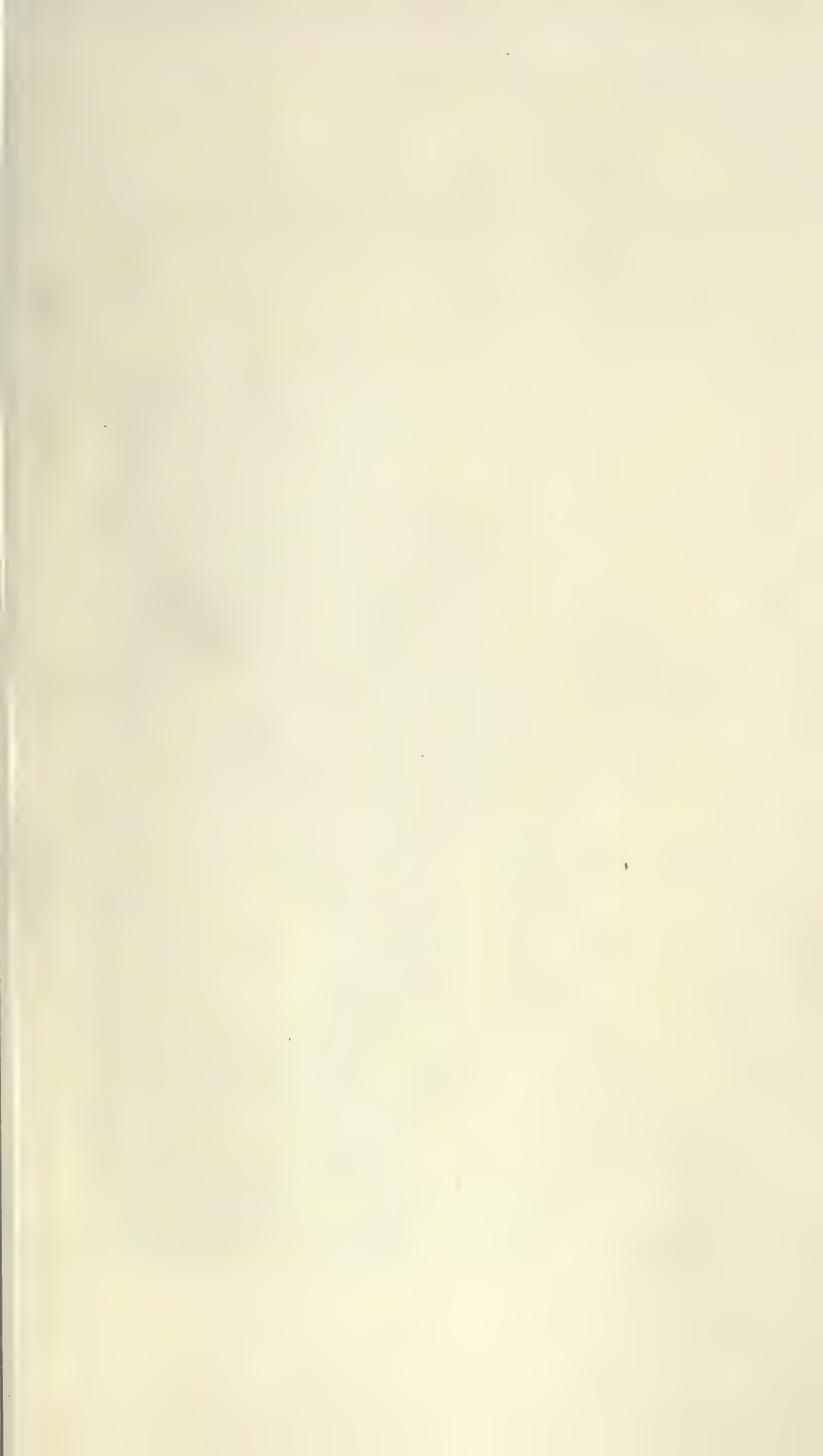
and others opened up a tremendous bombardment of the position; but the Japanese, fearing new counter attacks, not only stuck to the observation post which they had established up there, but they even tried, under the furious fire, to build up breastworks on top of the hill to enable them to beat off Russian assaults. This, however, did not become necessary. The Russians, dead tired after the prolonged terrible fighting, and demoralized by the unabated fury and the unquenchable persistence of the attacks, gave up all further hope of retrieving the position, and after a short time even their bombardment ceased. Their ammunition was beginning to run short, so they had to economize and keep what was left for the defence of the other forts and positions, and though occasionally they still sent a few shells against the hill, the Japanese were henceforth allowed to remain in uncontested possession of 203 to the end of the siege.

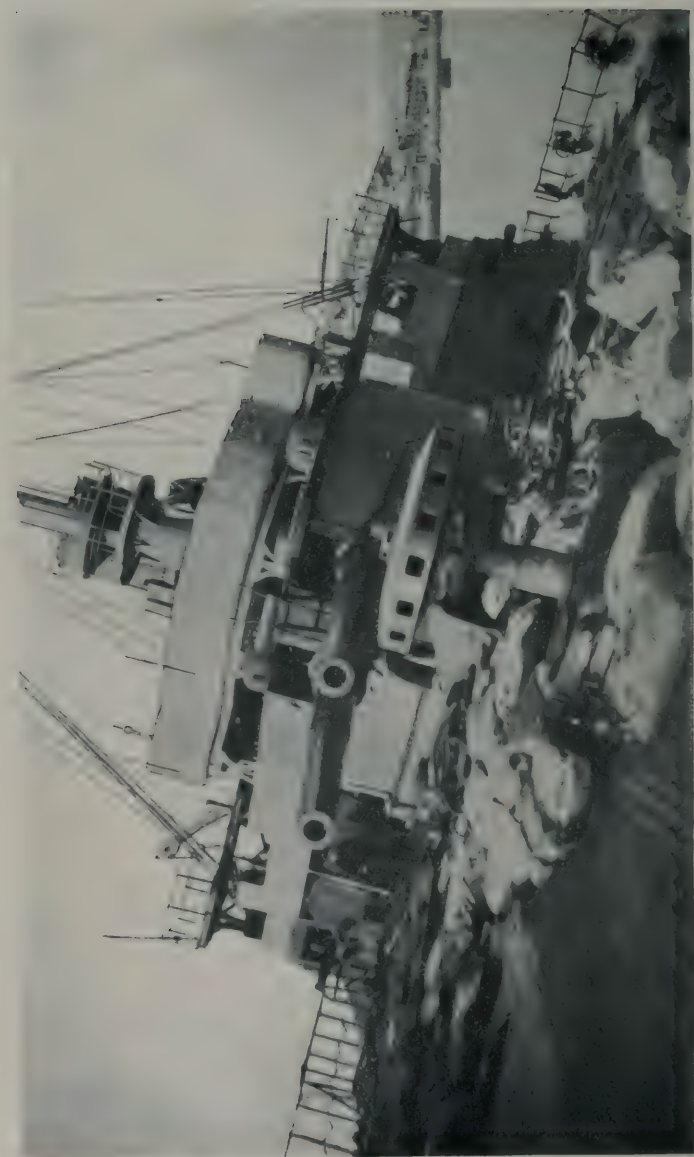
Already, at eleven o'clock in the morning of December 6th, the Japanese commenced bombarding the ships in the harbour with their 11-in. howitzers, and as the fire now could be observed and directed by telephone from the observation post to the batteries, it did not take long before the whole fleet were destroyed. The bombardment lasted for three days, during which all the bigger vessels, battleships and cruisers, were sent to the bottom of the shallow sea close under the land under Paijushan hill. The Russians tried to protect the decks of the ships by layers of bags filled with earth or ashes; but, as I have mentioned before, the fuses of the 11-in. shells did not take effect till they met with great resistance, so the projectiles went right through the sandbags, through the upper, unprotected deck, and



THE "POLTAVA" (LEFT) AND "PERESVIET" (RIGHT) SUNK IN THE HARBOUR
IN THE BACKGROUND TO THE LEFT THE TIGER'S TAIL PENINSULA







THE FORE DECK OF THE "POBIEDA"

exploded only on striking the armour of the lower deck, dealing wholesale destruction to the whole interior of the ship. Many of the shells did not even then explode, but went through the armoured deck as well, and the angle of the ballistic curve was such that a number of these shells went out through the sides of the ship below the armour belt, thereby contributing to the sinking of the vessel. The only ship that was scuttled by the Russians themselves was the *Peresviet*; all the others, in spite of all statements to the contrary, were sunk by the Japanese shells.

The only ship that did not allow herself to be sent to the bottom without some show of resistance was the battleship *Sebastopol*, commanded by the gallant Captain von Essen, of *Novik* fame. During the night of the 8th he took his ship, which had been lying in the dock, out of the harbour, and anchored her under shelter of the Tiger's Tail peninsula. Here, out of reach of the army guns, she was later on exposed to furious torpedo attacks for three days and nights, and after a splendid fight, during which she sent five of her pertinacious pigmy assailants to the bottom with all their crews, she was finally so badly hit that she ruled over, with a list of ten degrees, and sank in the shallow water. The attacks were then discontinued; but after some days Captain von Essen succeeded in getting her afloat and steamed out into deep water, where the vessel was scuttled.

After December 8th the fire of the big howitzers was turned against the new and the old town, while the destruction of the gunboats and the destroyers was left to the 4·7-in. naval guns. The four gunboats were sunk in the harbour, while the destroyers succeeded in keeping afloat.

At dawn they steamed out and took shelter under the Tiger's Tail promontory; at night they again took refuge in the harbour for fear of torpedo attacks in the dark. The Japanese tried to fire on them as they came steaming in at dusk, and tried also to shell them in the harbour during the night, but without success. All ten destroyers succeeded, at the capitulation, in making good their escape, four to Chefoo, five to Kiaochiao, and one to Shanghai.

The bombardment of the town was very efficacious, and contributed greatly to demoralize the garrison and bring about the surrender of the fortress. The fire was directed against the arsenal, which was soon laid completely in ruins, and against places which, through spies, the Japanese had learnt contained bakeries, flour mills, distilling plants, stores, &c. Their shells ignited a powder magazine under Paijushan hill, causing a tremendous explosion, and several houses and stores broke into flames. The civilian population, including about five hundred women and children, had of course a very hard time, with large shells flying about everywhere, bursting in the streets and coming crashing through the roofs or the walls of the houses, and it is marvellous that so comparatively few of them were killed or wounded; but the strain on the nerves from this unceasing, pitiless bombardment was very great, and reacted naturally on the minds of those who were responsible for their welfare and safety.

Though the Japanese certainly never deliberately fired on the hospitals in the town, it was impossible to avoid stray shots hitting these buildings, in some cases with grave consequences for the inmates. So many of the houses in the town had been destroyed, and so great was the number



HOSPITAL No. 9 IN THE NEW TOWN OF PORT ARTHUR, STRUCK BY JAPANESE SHELLS

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of sick and wounded, that the Russians had been obliged to establish hospitals all over the town, sometimes quite close to buildings which the Japanese knew contained flour mills, stores, &c., which they meant to destroy. With howitzers firing at long range it is impossible to shoot with so great an accuracy that any single building can be taken under fire without danger to the neighbouring houses. But it can, on the other hand, scarcely be denied that the Japanese might have done more to avoid the accusation which the Russians have formulated against them; the number of shells which "unfortunately" struck the hospitals was greater than should have been the case. The illustration of the army hospital No. 9 in the new town, in the neighbourhood of which all houses were either hospitals or private residences, irrefutably corroborates my statement. As I have already pointed out in one of the early chapters, one of the weakest points in the whole system of defence of Port Arthur was that the first line of fortifications was not pushed forward to a greater distance from the town, allowing the Japanese batteries, long before the *enceinte* forts had been taken, to do great damage to the town, destroying the arsenals, stores, barracks, and so forth, and depriving the soldiers, the labourers, and the civilians of a place of refuge where they could live and work and rest free from danger and without anxiety.

After the capture of 203 Metre Hill the Japanese operations fall into two distinct groups; on the one hand they followed up the advantages which the possession of the hill had given them, and on the other hand they carried forward their preparations for renewed vigorous attacks on the eastern fort-ridge.

With their enemies firmly established on 203 Metre Hill, the Russians had to give up, without further resistance, Akasaka-yama and a series of advanced positions on the plateau in front of Antzeshan and Itzeshan. They succeeded in carrying with them all their guns, and withdrew to the permanent forts, hard pressed by the Japanese, who occupied the positions one after the other. From the most advanced the besiegers opened up saps against Itzeshan.

On the neck between 203 and Akasaka-yama a battery of two 4·7-in. and three 12-pounder naval guns was established, with the object of taking the town and the harbour under direct fire. The guns were in position and ready for work on December 12th, and at 11 a.m. the bombardment commenced. Immediately a deluge of shells was showered over the battery from the Russian positions, but the Japanese bluejackets stood manfully to their guns, placed with their customary skill, and the Russians failed to silence them. After a while the scarcity of ammunition forced the Russians to leave the battery in peace, although it did serious damage to the buildings in the old and the new town.

Southward, along the high land towards the strong Taiyangkou forts, and down in the broad valley which extends to the west of the plateau from Louisa Bay to the inner part of the harbour, the Japanese advance progressed, without haste and with every precaution, but as surely and inexorably as fate itself. The advanced positions on Gingasa-yama and Yangshifang were occupied without much resistance. On the 17th a semi-permanently fortified hill about 1,000 yards to the west of Taiyangkou was captured after three hours' fighting. On the 20th two small lunettes on the

shores of Pigeon Bay were taken, and on the 25th Housanyangtou and two other villages a little more to the south were carried and held against a counter-attack in the night, so that the Japanese by about the end of the month had practically succeeded in cutting the land communications between Laotiehshan and the other sections of defence, and were in a fair position to begin offensive operations against the Taiyangkou forts.

But it was against the eastern fort-ridge that the Japanese during the latter part of December directed their main efforts. Having attained their secondary object in destroying the fleet in the harbour, they could now give all their attention and concentrate all their energies on the operations against the eastern forts, as a preliminary step towards their principal goal, the capture of the whole fortress.

There is between the Japanese tactics up to (and including) the third general attack and the mode of procedure adopted after this date a very marked difference. Up to the end of November all their attacks had been with a wide front and over a large area, in order to make it impossible for the defenders to concentrate any considerable force at any one point of assault. Incorrectly informed as the Japanese were regarding the actual strength of the garrison, this, considered tactically, was correct. From the beginning of December all their attacks were concentrated on single positions, sometimes, as at 203 Metre Hill, in connection with demonstrations in other directions, but in most cases restricted to one position only. The reasons for this change in their proceedings will be easily understood when one considers the situation into which their latest operations had brought the Japanese, and the

new means they had adopted to gain their ends.

After the severe reverse on November 26th the Japanese realized the futility of their methods, and recognized that they would have to proceed still further along the path by which the logic of events had led them step by step. In August they had tried to attack the forts as they had assaulted ordinary fortified positions at Nanshan, Kensan, Ojikeisan and elsewhere, by a direct frontal attack across open fields from sheltered positions many hundreds of yards away. In October, having been taught by bitter experiences the hopelessness of such proceedings against permanent forts, they sapped their way up to the foot of the glacis and tried to cover the last bit up to the forts with a rush; but this little open space also proved fatal, costing them hundreds of lives, so they decided to carry the saps right to the top of the counterscarp. Arriving here, they were stopped by the moats, and their experiences from the terrible fighting in the caponiers of North Kikuan fort made them realize that their work of sapping and digging was not yet at an end. In November they had tunnelled their way into the moats and attacked from here over the rampart; but even this proved too difficult a task against the machine guns and hand-grenades of the defenders securely ensconced behind their sandbag walls. Thus, step by step, the Japanese had been forced to dig their way further and further forward against the forts, until now, as the final and necessary conclusion drawn from their bitter experiences, they carried their saps or tunnels right into the interior of the forts.

It is easy enough now to say that this is what

they ought to have done at once ; but, as I have already pointed out, it must be borne in mind that at the siege of Port Arthur the Japanese were faced by a practically new problem, with no precedents to fall back on, and which therefore had to be solved experimentally. I maintain that the second general attack was ill-advised and ought not to have been undertaken ; but the two other attacks, in August and in November, were under the circumstances, justifiable, in spite of the unsuccessful issue of the experiments.

Already, before the third general attack, the Japanese had commenced digging a shaft from the moat under the escarp of North Kikuan fort, and during the following three weeks a complete mine-gallery was constructed, with branches under the whole front rampart. At the end of each branch a big charge of dynamite was placed ; electric wires were connected with the detonators, and the mine-shafts were then blocked with hard rammed earth. There were two main shafts with, in all, seven branches ; the total weight of the dynamite charges was a little over two tons.

On December 18th everything was ready for the explosion. The Japanese plan was to take the fort by surprise ; there would be nothing to give the garrison warning. At noon, when the men in the moat and the foremost trenches generally were relieved, and when therefore the Russians were accustomed to see an unusual commotion in the approaches, the attacking forces were to be drawn up in the caponiers and the last parallels. There would be no previous bombardment to put the defenders on the alert. Immediately after the explosion the rush would be made, and the Japanese felt confident that during

the first moments of awe and consternation it would be an easy matter to overpower the panic-stricken garrison. The rush would be made by volunteers of the 22nd regiment, which had fought its way up towards the fort from the beginning, while the 38th regiment of the second reserve, which had fought so bravely at 203 and Akasakayama—veterans therefore in years and experience—were kept in readiness to support the assault.

The soldiers who had volunteered for the first rush were divided into two batches. One, consisting of sixty men, each with a red ribbon tied round his arm, was drawn up in the caponiers, and the moment the explosion took place they were to charge into the interior of the fort and hurl themselves against the defenders, immediately followed by the second batch, which was kept ready in the last parallel; this latter force was distinguished by a white badge. If the volunteers did not succeed, during the first moments of confusion and consternation, in driving out the garrison, the bulk of the regiments should follow and crush the defenders by the overwhelming forces of numbers.

Although the men felt sure of victory, they realized with what grim stubbornness the Russians stood their ground; the men who had taken part in the fighting at 203 especially had a full understanding of the dangers that faced them and the fate which most likely would overtake them. They had, therefore, written their full names on their caps, their tunics, their leggings, and other articles of clothing, so that, even if only an arm or leg, or part of a body were found after the hand-grenades and the high-explosive shells had done their work amongst them, it would be possible to ascertain their fate and to give a

name to the remnants which would be buried or cremated after the fight. These quiet preparations speak more highly of the admirable courage and devotion of the Japanese soldiers than the most gallant deeds, and the most desperate daring, during the actual fighting. It is easy to be brave in the heat of the battle, when one's blood is up and one "sees red." To volunteer to go against the enemy with such a terrible fate staring one in the face, and to quietly make all preparations for one's own funeral, demands a higher class of courage; one which deserves our full and unreserved admiration.

December 19th was a beautiful winter's day. There was not a breath of wind, and from a deep blue, cloudless sky the sun shone, bright and warm, over a scene of perfect beauty. A heavy fall of snow had shrouded the bleak, grey hill-sides in raiment of silver gauze, strewn with glittering diamonds, accentuating the picturesque forms of the hills and mountains and making their rugged outlines stand out sharp and clear, with beautiful blue shadows in the folds of the clinging drapery. Through the light golden haze the lofty peaks of far-off Laotiehshan with its salient spurs and deep-furrowed sides looked like a fairy palace, light and airy, an artist's dream in shining white and azure blue.

I found an excellent observation post not too far away from the scene of events, and was sitting there for hours before the attack commenced. There was nothing to indicate that anything out of the common was about to happen. In "P" fort the Japanese had mounted two 6-in. howitzers, with which they could fire directly into the interior of North Kikuan fort, and they were now trying to destroy the bomb-proofs under the *banquette* here.

The big guns on East Kikuan then woke up, and directed a very telling fire against the howitzers, silencing them after a short time. Then the Eastern Japanese batteries opened up and engaged the East Kikuan guns, which took up the challenge and answered back. When the fire against "P" fort slackened the howitzers here recommenced firing on the bomb-proofs, until the Russian fire became too harassing, and in this way the artillery on both sides improvised a little *lever de rideau* before the real drama commenced. It reminded me to a certain degree of the famous "triangular duel" in one of Marryatt's novels. The little affair, lasting for about an hour, and without much vehemence, was such as might be expected in the daily routine of siege operations.

The explosion had been fixed for two o'clock sharp; but a Russian shell had cut the electric wire by which the charges were to be fired, so it was a quarter of an hour later that the event took place.

Suddenly out from the cone-shaped fort a huge black column of smoke and earth and bits of timber—possibly the bodies of men—shot skywards with a lightning speed which rapidly diminished, until it stopped a couple of hundred feet up in the air, where it widened out, forming an immense canopy over the ill-fated fort. A few moments later a second explosion took place, sending another column of earth and smoke and scarred *débris* in the wake of the former. And then, before yet the *débris* had fallen back on the earth again, the red-badged volunteers sprang up and stormed forth on their perilous errand. Simultaneously a veritable hailstorm of shells was showered over the rear of the fort from all the Japanese positions, to augment the consternation

of the defenders and render easy the task of the attackers.

Of the two explosions, only the one at the north-eastern corner had been successful, blowing up the whole rampart here, and completely wrecking this part of the fort. The other mines blew most of their strength out backwards through the shafts which it had been very difficult to get properly blocked with the frozen earth. The volunteers of the first batch were all killed by the falling stones and lumps of earth, and completely buried under the *débris*, and the explosion filled the approaches up to the moat, making it impossible for the second batch or the supports to follow. To attack across the open field, without any shelter, under the furious fire of the Russian batteries, was out of the question; the Japanese had tried that once too often. They had to clear away the *débris* from their saps before any attack could be made, and this respite enabled the Russians to send reinforcements of about 300 men, and to make arrangements for a firm stand in the rear of the fort where it was undamaged by the explosion.

It was nearly dusk before the men of the 22nd regiment were drawn up under the parapet of the front rampart. The breastworks here were very high, about twenty feet above the *terre-plein* of the fort, in order to give protection against fire from Takushan, which loomed up, tall and forbidding, about 2,500 yards away. It was, as one of the officers said to me, like standing on the rim of a basin, looking down into what they knew would soon be transformed into a witch's kettle, seething with blood and horrors. And at the rear of the fort they saw before them the sandbag trenches, behind which the Russian sharpshooters

were crouching, and the machine guns lying in wait to do their deadly work. It was a sight to send a shiver through the bravest man.

After Lieutenant-General Tsuchiya was seriously wounded in the battle of November 26th, the 11th Division got a new commander. His name was Sameyeda. He was a general of engineers, attached to the general staff in Tokyo, and had originally been sent here to report on the progress of the engineering works in front of Port Arthur. He was a rather queer-looking fellow, very short of stature even for a Japanese, with a spare, wiry frame, long-armed, and with strong, sinewy hands, and an odd, old face, all wrinkled and furrowed, with skin like parchment, but with a pair of young, watchful eyes, looking keen as daggers. His officers had the greatest respect for him.

"He is very strong," they told me; "he can still throw the best of us, and he is very brave."

This man had made up his mind that he would take North Kikuan fort, or die in the attempt. On the day of the attack he had bathed and washed, put on clean underwear, and donned his best uniform, with all his orders and medals. It is an old saying amongst the Japanese that, as they always fight like gentlemen, they want to die as gentlemen, dressed like gentlemen. This scrupulous toilet was therefore to his subordinates the outward sign of his firm determination.

When the men of the 22nd regiment were drawn up under the parapet ready for the assault, General Sameyeda made a tour of inspection along their lines. The appearance of the men did not satisfy him.

"I read fear in their faces," he said to me later, "so I ordered them back."

It was hard on the regiment which had had all the work, and done all the fighting against the fort from the beginning of the siege, to be debarred from reaping the fruits of their own toil, and see another regiment winning the prize which they considered in fairness to be theirs; but the General had no such sentimental scruples. He had read their faces, he saw that they had been too long in the front line, and he knew that a fresh regiment, sent against the fort for the first time, and goaded on by thoughts of the honour and glory of taking the formidable position where another regiment had failed, would be better fit for the dangerous work.

A battalion of the 38th regiment was ordered up instead, and General Sameyeda placed himself at their head. In order to be less conspicuous the men had drawn their grey woollen jerseys and drawers and hoods over their dark winter uniforms; round their waist they had tied a rope fuse, the lighted end of which dangled in front of them, glowing red in the dusky demi-jour. Thus arrayed, they presented a most peculiar and uncanny appearance; wanting only a pair of horns apiece to make them look like perfect devils. They carried nothing but their rifles, their cartridge belts, and a couple of hand grenades each.

The attack commenced at 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

In order to make it more difficult for the Russians to use their machine guns, the men were sent over the parapet into the interior of the forts one by one from different parts of the ramparts. As soon as there was a little interval in the rattling of the machine guns a man would jump up and run for his life, and seek shelter behind the *débris* piled up in the *terre-blein* after the

explosions, or in the holes which the big howitzer shells had made in the ground. Though many of the men were shot down during this short race, little by little a force of about 150 men was assembled in the front part of the fort, and the commander, Captain Iwamoto, then led them against the sandbag trenches at the rear. A furious combat ensued here, and though the Japanese were unable to dislodge their stubborn antagonists, they succeeded in drawing the attention of the defenders from the ramparts, over which strong supports were now pouring. The fighting was mostly hand-to-hand, but the Russian machine guns took an important part in the defence, their galling fire making fearful ravages amongst the attacking party. The Japanese therefore got a couple of mountain guns hauled up on the parapet, and with these succeeded in silencing the Maxims.

But the fighting still went on for hours. Man after man of the brave defenders was struck down at his post, and the terrible shelling of the trenches leading to the fort made it impossible for the Russians to send up further reinforcements, while, with the Japanese, the more heads that were cut off the hydra, the more grew out again. At half-past eleven, after nearly seven hours of continuous terrible fighting, the few survivors of the garrison (the Japanese estimate them at about twenty men) finally gave up the hopeless struggle and fled, blasting the bridge across the moat behind them.

The Japanese losses amounted to between 700 and 800 men; but they thought that cheap. The first permanent fort was now at last, after four months of continuous fighting, in their hands. The Japanese were jubilant. General

Sameyeda had champagne brought up ; deputations from the other divisions came and tendered their congratulations, and there was a tremendous banzai-ing and jubilation up in the captured fort, which spread all through the nearest Japanese lines like wildfire.

CHAPTER XXII

COLLAPSE

NOT only at North Kikuan fort had the Japanese been busy with underground work; at the other two permanent forts on the ridge, Sungshuh and Erhlung, the same kind of mining operations had been carried out since the general attack in November, but owing to the harder soil in which they had to work, and—at Sungshuh—to the countermining of the Russians, it had taken the Japanese some time longer before they were ready to explode their mines. Similar operations were also carried out against the Chinese wall behind the Panlung forts, but it was not in the Japanese plans to attempt to break through here until the forts had been taken.

The explosion of the mines under the ramparts of Erhlung took place on December 28th at ten o'clock in the morning, without any preliminary and forewarning bombardment. The arrangement of the mining galleries, the numbers and the weight of the charges, was the same as at North Kikuan; the plan of attack likewise; but the Japanese had better luck with their explosions than at the former place. The *débris* filled the moat and the saps leading up to the parapet, making the way easier for the attacking forces, but at the same time exposing them to a devas-

tating fire from the Itzeshan batteries during their advance.

Directly after the explosion hundreds of shells and shrapnel were poured in over the fort from all the Japanese positions, and at the same time the infantry prepared to attack. The 19th and the 36th regiments, which were detailed for this work, had been drawn up in the approaches and the last parallels. Ground scouts were sent ahead, and succeeded in finding some dead ground under the parapet, and they signalled to the others to follow. Across the shell-swept zone the men were dribbled in twos and threes, running at the top of their speed towards the sheltered places. Within a few minutes a considerable force was assembled under the parapet, sheltered from the artillery fire by the heaps of *débris* caused by the explosion, and from here they made their way into the interior of the fort.

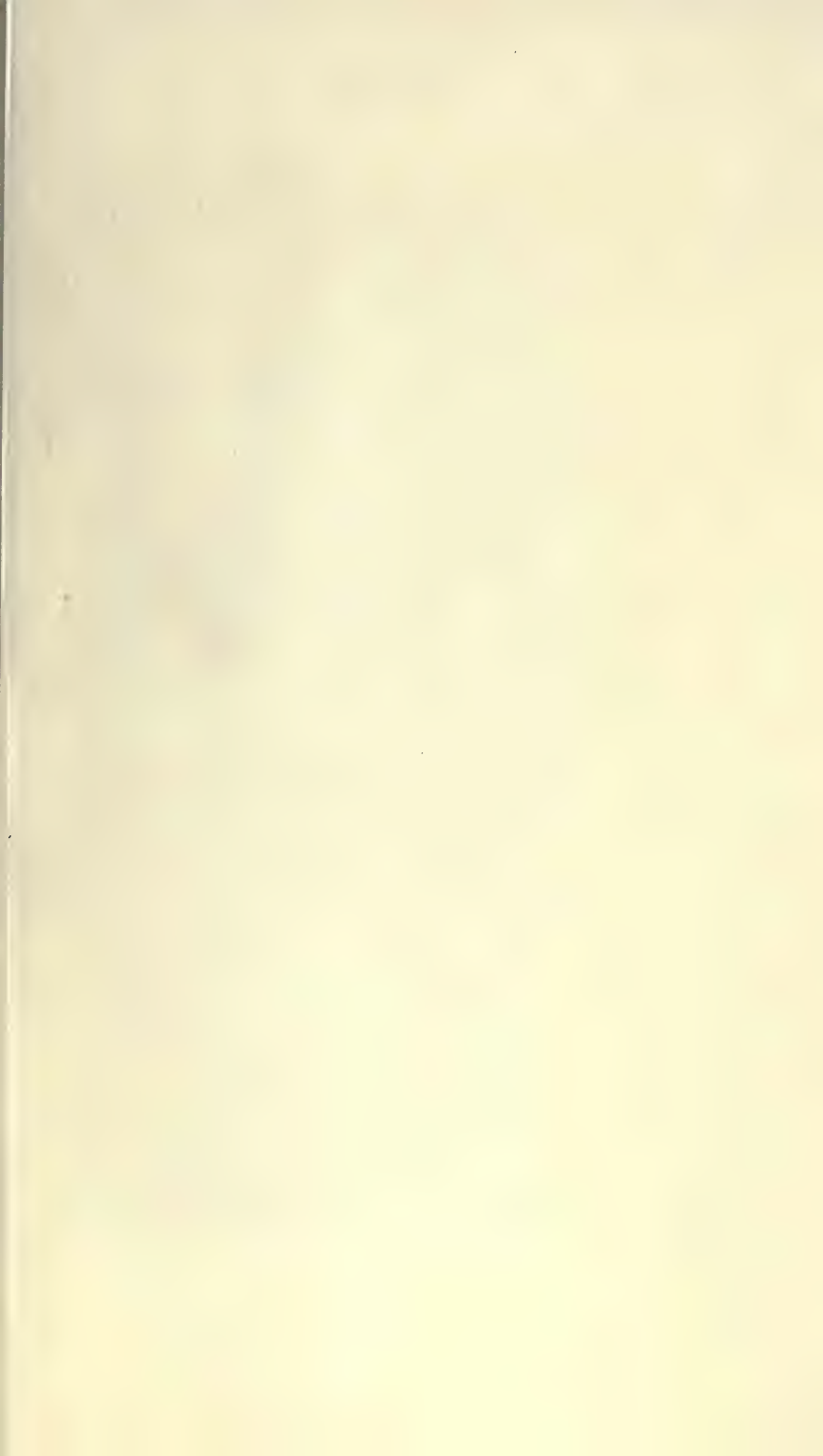
The total Russian garrison in Erhlung consisted of about 500 men of the 26th East Siberian Sharpshooters. About half of this force had been drawn up in the lower battery of the fort. The explosion killed a number of them; the others were so stunned by the shock that they were unable to make any serious resistance to the Japanese onslaught. The whole of this force was annihilated, and the Japanese took possession of the lower level of the fort; in amongst the heaps of earth and blocks of concrete they were able to find shelter, awaiting the decision of the staff officers whether the upper battery should be attacked at once, or if mining operations should be continued against this part of the work. A thorough reconnaissance was made, and in the meantime the soldiers were set to work to entrench themselves in the interior of the fort, and to secure

their lines of communication by constructing saps from the last parallel.

On receiving the reports of the reconnoitring parties, the Japanese decided to attack the upper battery at once, and at four o'clock in the afternoon a rush was made in full force, the two regiments advancing together. One detachment worked round to the gorge, the others charged over the front breastworks, and from all sides the Japanese swarmed in upon the defenders. They, however, fought splendidly, disputing every inch of ground with the greatest obstinacy, fighting at the gun epaulements, at the barracks, at the kitchen, now out in the open, in desperate hand-to-hand encounters, now sheltered behind sandbags or dodging behind walls and round corners, with rifles and hand-grenades. Hour after hour passed by, but the fighting continued with unabated fury, and the Japanese progress was very slow—they lost many men.

However, the result was never in doubt. It was impossible for the Russians to send reinforcements, and the 250 men that were left of the garrison after the storming of the lower battery must, of course, in time become exhausted, while the Japanese had unlimited resources to draw upon and could pour in fresh troops continually. Still, it was not until three o'clock in the morning, after eleven hours of incessant close-range fighting, that the remainder of the brave garrison gave up the hopeless struggle and retired, after setting fire to everything inflammable. The Japanese took three prisoners; about 150 men escaped; the remainder died. The Japanese losses amounted to over a thousand men, killed and wounded.

It had been a splendid fight on both sides, and especially the defence of the small garrison against





THE INTERIOR OF SUNGSHUH FORT AFTER THE EXPLOSION

TO THE RIGHT THE ENTRANCE TO THE CASTLE WHERE THE GREATEST PART OF THE GARRISON WAS ENTOMBED

terrible odds was beyond praise. But it was also the last time. For, from this day onwards, the Russians seemed to have completely lost heart, and the defence they made against the attacks which followed was very weak, and can in no way be compared with the stand they had made on all previous occasions since the first general attack in August.

Only one of the permanent *enceinte* forts in this section now remained in the hands of the Russians, namely Sungshuh, and to hold this for any length of time, with the Japanese firmly established in the higher neighbouring Erhlung fort, was practically impossible. Surrounded on three sides by deep narrow gullies, while on the north side a steep incline led down to Shuishi valley, Sungshuh fort was completely isolated and left to its own resources. The Japanese had undermined the fort in the same manner as Erhlung and North Kikuan; but the progress had been somewhat slower owing to the Russian counter-mining compelling them to make several alterations in their galleries. On the other hand, the shafts had been blocked more firmly than at the other places, concrete having been used instead of rammed earth.

The explosion, which took place at 10 a.m. on the last day of the year, was therefore particularly effective, and as the shock ignited a large store of dynamite, which exploded with tremendous violence, practically the whole interior of the fort was destroyed, and the greater part of the garrison, who had remained in the bomb-proofs behind the gun epaulement, was buried alive under a deep layer of *débris*. Seeing this, the remainder hoisted the white flag and surrendered. The Japanese at once set to work to dig them out, and

soon succeeded in laying bare the entrance, whereupon the whole force, some 160 men, were taken prisoners. The whole affair had been most tame; hardly a rifle shot had been fired; even the artillery of the western forts, in an excellent position for harassing the Japanese advance, remained wonderfully silent and subdued.

The Japanese did not let the grass grow under their feet. Although it was New Year's Eve, the one great festival of the year in Japan, to the celebration of which they had long looked forward, they at once followed up their advantage while the enemy was still dismayed and unmanned by the series of reverses which had befallen him. At six o'clock in the afternoon a mine was exploded under the Chinese wall behind East Panlung, and through the breach thus made the Japanese advanced to attack the different battery positions on the tops of the ridge. New Panlung, Eboshi, and "H" fort were taken without much resistance. The Russians seemed benumbed, and only at Wantai did they make a good stand.

This hill had only a very narrow plateau, barely affording room for the two 6-in. guns which had been brought into position there. Bomb-proofs of timber and sandbags were constructed on the southern slope right behind the battery, and all round the sugar-loaf-shaped hill a girdle of infantry trenches was built at a distance of twenty-five to thirty yards from the guns. After some sharp fighting, these trenches were captured in the course of the night, and the small garrison was thus completely cut off and surrounded; but it still held out bravely, and not till five o'clock in the afternoon of New Year's Day did the Japanese finally capture the position.

During the following night all the other

battery positions, from East Kikuan to Sungshuh—with the exception of the supporting fort of Sungshuh—fell into the hands of the Japanese without serious resistance. The strong East Kikuan fort was blown up by the Russians about two o'clock in the morning, completely wrecking this, in all probability, the strongest of the Russian positions. When I visited the place a couple of days afterwards, a large and deep crater, with immense blocks of concrete and large fragments of heavy guns thrown together in chaotic confusion, marked the site of the fort which the Japanese for so long had vainly endeavoured to capture.

Simultaneously with these events the Japanese right wing was attacking positions at the foot of Laotiehshan. The assaults on the eastern battery positions were commenced, in the first place, as a demonstration to draw the attention of the besieged away from this attack; but finding the Russian resistance so considerably weakened, the demonstration was developed into a serious attack, with the results mentioned, while the operations out west came to assume a more demonstrative character.

Although the Japanese had in this way during the last couple of weeks made enormous strides towards their goal, nobody, even the best informed at the Japanese headquarters, dreamt that the end was so near. The inner line of defence, which still separated the besiegers from the old town, was very weak, and it was not conjectured that the Russians would try to make any determined stand here. The defence works were completely dominated from the newly captured positions, and the old town also was entirely at the mercy of the besiegers from the moment their

guns were placed in the old Russian battery positions. The Japanese imagined that the very marked weakening of the defence indicated that the Russians intended to give up the whole eastern fort-ridge with the old town, possibly with exception of the sea forts. They thought that General Stoessel had realized that the garrison was insufficient to hold the long line of defence from Pigeon Bay to Yenchang; but if the troops were concentrated in the western and southern sections, which were still practically intact, they would be strong enough to hold the besiegers at bay yet for some time. On New Year's Day, when I made the customary calls in the morning, officers of the Headquarters Staff told me that the Japanese did not anticipate the fall of the fortress for another six weeks or two months. The Russian proposal of surrender came therefore as a complete, though very pleasant surprise, to the Japanese.

On New Year's Day, at half-past four in the afternoon, a Russian *parlementaire* was sent out from Port Arthur under a flag of truce. He proceeded along the main road towards the south-eastern Shuishi lunette, where he was met by a Japanese staff officer to whom he handed a letter from General Stoessel to General Nogi. The letter was written in English, and read :—

“ SIR,

“ Taking in consideration the state of affairs in the seat of war in general, I find the further resistance of Port Arthur useless, and in view of the fruitless loss of men I would like to negotiate about the capitulation. If you agree to this, I beg you to appoint delegates for this purpose who would discuss about the conditions, order of

capitulation, and to choose a place where my delegates will meet with them.

"I avail myself of the opportunity to express to you my sentiments of esteem.

"(Signed) STOESSEL."

The letter was addressed to His Excellency Baron M. Nogi, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Army besieging Port Arthur. It was dated December, 1904, the day of the month being left blank.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CAPITULATION

THUS ended the siege of Port Arthur. It is not my intention to give an account of the *pourparlers* which took place between the chiefs of staff of the two armies concerning the terms of capitulation, nor of the subsequent handing over of the fortress, the meeting of General Nogi and General Stoessel, the entry of the victorious army into Port Arthur, and so on. I am only dealing with the military operations, and they came to an end on January 2nd, when hostilities were suspended pending the result of the negotiations. But there is one question which naturally presents itself, and which is worthy of consideration:—Was the capitulation on January 1st a necessity? Was it justifiable?

So much has been said and written on this subject, and so many conflicting opinions have been expressed on the spur of the moment, before there was enough statistical and other material at hand on which to base a correct appreciation of the situation, that it is no wonder that the public has not yet been able to make up its mind on this most vital question. That a surrender would have been necessary before very long everybody agreed; the fortress was doomed, and its fall was merely a question of time. But had the time come on January 1st? Ought not the garrison to



GENERAL STOESEL (ON THE WHITE ARAB TO THE LEFT) LEAVING PLUMTREE COTTAGE AFTER THE MEETING
WITH GENERAL NOGI ON JANUARY 5th, 1905

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have held out for another month or another six weeks? Those are the questions which have been raised, and to which I will endeavour to give an answer.

When, after the first interview between the chiefs of staff at Plumtree Cottage, Shuishi village, I asked at headquarters what it was that had caused the Russians to surrender at the present juncture, I was told that they had given the following reasons:—

1. The insufficient strength of the garrison. There were only 4,000 soldiers to defend the immense area against the Japanese forces, which now amounted to nearly 100,000 men. The remainder of the garrison was either sick or wounded.

2. Shortness of ammunition and provisions: there was only ammunition enough for five days more.

3. The state of the hospitals. Nearly 20,000 men were in hospital, sick or wounded, and there was no more medicine, disinfectants, bandages nor proper compresses, and no suitable food for them. Severe epidemics of typhoid, dysentery, and scurvy had broken out, and the number of sick was increasing by hundreds daily.

4. The capture of their strongest forts in the Eastern section made it inevitable that the old town, where most of the hospitals were situated and where most of the civilian population lived, must be surrendered in the near future; besides, the Russians feared that if it were taken by assault a general massacre might follow.

These reasons, of course, fully justified a surrender, and I think everybody felt relieved that the garrison, which for months had fought so bravely against heavy odds, were spared the last

bitter fight. The defenders had done their duty and more, and nothing but praise was heard of their decision from the Japanese, for so long their opponents, or from the military attachés and the foreign correspondents who had witnessed their splendid defence. In the opinion of all they were nothing less than heroes, and the capitulation was honourable and well advised.

Unfortunately this first impression did not last long. The following days established beyond doubt that most of the statements which the Russians (presumably General Reiss, the chief of staff) had made were to a large extent either absolutely false or greatly exaggerated. Point for point, the Japanese investigations disclosed the following facts, as compared with the Russian statements:—

1. Exclusive of those in hospital, the total garrison of Port Arthur on the day of surrender consisted of about 27,200 officers and men, the navy included. This force, which is a good deal in excess even of what the Japanese estimated to be the total number at the beginning of the siege, would be fully adequate to make a good defence of the large section of the fortress still remaining in the hands of the Russians at the date of capitulation.

2. Still more misleading were the statements concerning the stocks of provisions and ammunition. There was flour enough to feed the garrison for months, and there were over 1,800 horses; private stores had not been commandeered. There were, according to Japanese statements, 82,670 shells and 2,266,800 rifle cartridges left in the fortress, together with about thirty tons of gunpowder, and means for refilling the empty cartridge cases.



FROM THE FORMAL ENTRY OF THE JAPANESE ARMY INTO PORT ARTHUR ON JANUARY 13TH, 1905

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The Russian artillery officer who was in charge of the laboratories of the arsenal pointed out to me, in a private conversation, that these numbers, though presumably perfectly correct, must be taken *cum grano salis*. Of the 80,000 shells by far the greater part was either 37 millimetre ($1\frac{1}{2}$ in.) quick-firer shells or old Chinese shells, which, even if they could be re-turned or re-filled, would be of very little use; of larger calibre shells ready for use, there remained only about 5,000. The insignificant part which the artillery had played at the capture of Sungshuh and the battery positions seems to bear out this statement. As to the thirty tons of gunpowder, he pointed out that several magazines, containing considerably larger quantities, had already been blown up by the shells of the besiegers, and that the same fate most probably was in store for the remainder; besides the last day's shelling had practically destroyed the whole arsenal, and when the old town was given up the small factory on the Tiger's Tail would not be of much use for the purpose. But even admitting this, the ammunition would be sufficient to carry on the defence for at least another month.

3. The statements concerning the sanitary situation were also partly misleading. There were no real "epidemics" of typhoid or dysentery, the total number of cases being forty-three of the former, and of the latter 460. Neither is it true that the stock of medicine and disinfectants had given out. But in other respects the Russian statements are perfectly correct, and the condition of the hospitals and the state of health of the garrison undoubtedly greatly influenced the decision of General Stoessel.

The state of the hospitals was very bad, they were overcrowded and new sick came in, in

steadily increasing numbers, every day. The bandages had completely given out ; what there were had been washed and used over and over again. Compresses were also lacking, though new ones were improvised from seaweed, washed in solution of potash. There was no suitable food for the sick and wounded ; especially the lack of fresh fruit and vegetables was keenly felt ; bread and horseflesh alone do not constitute a very salubrious diet for sick men. There were, at the time of the capitulation, about 17,000 men in hospital ; of these only 3,387 were wounded ; the others were suffering from various diseases. The most common was the scurvy, of which there were 5,625 serious cases under treatment, but besides these, according to the Japanese Inspector General, over 90 per cent. of the men in the hospitals suffered from lighter attacks of this disease, which was spreading very rapidly also amongst the men in the forts and the trenches. Ten days before the capitulation there were about 100 fresh cases daily ; but the number increased rapidly to 200, 400, 800, even 1,000 on the last days, and it is easy to foresee that, with no means of combating the disease, the whole garrison would soon succumb to it.

The situation when the fortress surrendered therefore was this :—

General Stoessel could give up the eastern fort-ridge and the old town and concentrate his forces in the two other sections. He could safely leave the sick and wounded in the hospitals under the protection of the Red Cross flag, and feel sure that the Japanese would look after them and take care of them ; but the question must naturally present itself to him, What would become of the men who were wounded or fell sick during the

fight to come? He would have no means of treating them properly and caring for them, no hospitals, no bandages, no proper food. He could certainly keep up the defence still for some weeks; but it would have meant agonies and death to those of his men who were wounded, and I think it must be considered at least excusable that, for humanity's sake, he chose to give in rather than to see his soldiers, who had fought so long and so bravely, perish like dogs for lack of proper care and nourishment.

4. The question of housing the large civilian population would also be difficult to solve. There were in Port Arthur over 500 women and children, 3,000 or 4,000 workmen, and a fairly large number of other inhabitants, Russians and foreigners, besides the Chinese. These could scarcely be left behind, like the men in hospital. I am personally fully convinced that there was no fear of a massacre; but could General Stoessel take the responsibility even if he felt equally sure? There had been little or no quarter from either side during the whole siege, and there was still a cloud hanging over Port Arthur since 1894. Had he a right to do it?

After the capture of 203 Metre Hill the new town was no longer a place to live in. As it was, the bombardment had destroyed many of the houses and forced practically everybody to take refuge in the old town, where they were better protected, and where many bomb-proofs had been constructed; and of course, when this was evacuated, it was certain that a tremendous bombardment would be concentrated on the new town. We had supposed, and it had been reported by Chinese spies, that arrangements had been made at Laotiehshan for housing the women and

children there, but later investigations have proved that nothing of the kind had been done, so General Stoessel had this large civilian population on his hands, and no means of properly caring for them. This consideration undoubtedly contributed to strengthen his resolution.

I think it must be admitted that General Stoessel had several strong reasons for surrendering; but, of course, the weight of these reasons must be considered in the light of what he would have gained if he had kept up the defence to the bitter end, as long as he had men and food and ammunition enough,—that is, in this case, for another five or six weeks. Were the results he could hope to obtain worth the sacrifices?

There was no hope that the fortress could be relieved in time: from that point of view he cannot be blamed for his decision. On the other side of the question, the surrender would set free General Nogi's army of nearly 100,000 men, and this large reinforcement of troops in the north was, of course, of the greatest importance for the situation on the main theatre of operations. It was General Stoessel's duty to keep this army tied down at Port Arthur as long as possible, and the only excuse for his not doing so is that he, like so many others, may have supposed that no operations could be carried out in Manchuria during the intense cold which generally reigns there until the end of March, and that long before this the fortress was bound to fall. As matters turned out, with the exceptionally mild winter of 1904-5 the surrender of Port Arthur precipitated, if it did not cause, the *débâcle* at Mukden.

I think the verdict will come to be that the capitulation of Port Arthur on January 1st was

not necessary and scarcely justifiable, but that General Stoessel's decision to a certain degree was excusable, because circumstances over which he had no control, and which it was impossible to foresee—for the weather was cold enough during the whole month of December—made fatal a step that under ordinary circumstances could have in no degree influenced the strategical situation in Manchuria.

But the real reason of surrender was neither lack of men, ammunition and provisions, nor the state of the hospitals, nor the difficulty of dealing with the civilian population. The more information I have been able to glean from all sources, especially from conversations with officers and men and civilians in Port Arthur, the more I feel convinced that the cause of the surrender is to be found in the deep discouragement which had taken hold of the garrison, especially the private soldiers, during the last few weeks of the siege. The successive explosions of their forts and trenches had deeply impressed them; they felt, quite naturally, as if living on a volcano, with a constant apprehension that their turn for a heavenward journey might come next. The long strain, the privations of many kinds, the sanguinary, inhuman fighting, the never-ceasing bombardment, also began to tell heavily on their nerves, and the irresistible progress of the Japanese, the certainty of having to surrender shortly, the hopelessness of the struggle, with the prospects of a possible massacre to crown their misery, plunged them in the deepest gloom.

This moral factor, in connection with the more physical causes, predisposed them to a remarkable degree to the attacks of scurvy and other diseases. It is a noteworthy fact, corroborated by Japanese

as well as Russian surgeons, that directly after the capitulation, when the strain suddenly relaxed, the ravages of scurvy at once ceased; there were practically no new cases, and even a very large number of the men under treatment in the hospitals rapidly recovered, long before the more varied and nutritious diet, which now was obtainable, could possibly have had any effect on their state of health. I need not say that "shamming" was out of the question; the cases were genuine enough.

Still, even under the existing circumstances I do not think that the fortress would have surrendered, if General Kondratienko had not been killed by an 11-in. shell in North Kikuan fort on December 15th. For the name that will go down to history coupled with the defence of Port Arthur will not be Stoessel's. He was, from all I can learn, nothing but a figure-head, a weak and vain man, a martinet, unbeloved by his men, and little respected by his officers. The real man was Kondratienko. Together with Colonel Rashefsky, of the engineers, he had planned the fortifications, and he worked indefatigably day and night to have them erected and perfected. He was always alert, always in the fighting lines, leading and cheering his men, and sharing their hardships, always full of resource, ever able to check a Japanese move by a cleverly thought-out counter-move. He was the born leader to whom everybody bowed, and his strong will, wide knowledge, and great personal bravery, made him the soul of the whole defence. He was the idol of his soldiers, who knew his firm intention to continue the fight to the bitter end. When he died, everything seemed to collapse, everybody lost heart, and the party who, headed by Stoessel,



GENERAL KONDRATIENKO



wanted to give in, got the upper hand. The place surrendered, wisely, perhaps, but not too well—and the defence, which might have gone down to posterity as one of the finest feats of arms of all history, was shorn of the lustre which else would have attached to the memory of Port Arthur.

The history of the siege of Port Arthur reminds me of the fate of Ibsen's powerful drama, "A Doll's House." When that work was first staged in Germany (or was it America?), the public was not yet accustomed to such strong food, and no manager dared produce the play in its original shape, with its defiant, discordant ending. One manager arranged to have the final scene changed, so that Nora, at the last moment, at the entreaty of her husband, consents to stay at home "for the children's sake." It spoilt the drama of course, this milk-and-watery ending to the strong, passionate pleadings; and to-day everybody scoffs at the man and the spirit that tempted him to tamper with Ibsen's play.

Thus, it seems to me, is the drama of Port Arthur. Admirably built up, it leads us as by a master's hand from one powerfully conceived, splendidly acted scene to another until nearly the end, when the strong hand suddenly relaxes its grip, and the whole effect of the heroic drama is spoilt by the insipid ending, so out of tune with the intense plot of the play. And as in "A Doll's House," the greatness of the piece was ruthlessly marred "for the children's sake," so the weak-spirited Port Arthur manager, *alias* General Stoessel, sacrificed the eternal honour and glory of this great siege-drama "for humanity's sake." *Grosse Geister begegnen sich.**

* "Great minds meet."



The siege of Port Arthur is a grim tragedy, but the most tragic part is that it was not allowed to end as a tragedy. Still, it would be unfair to forget, because of the weakness of the concluding scenes, the grand, masterly drama which the Russians have given to history by their seven months' heroic struggle.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE REASON

IT may be that in the preceding pages I have unduly emphasized the excellence of the defence as compared with the methods of the attack. Being attached to the Japanese headquarters, and in a position to follow closely all their operations, it is natural that I should see, not only the good points of their dispositions, but also the several mistakes and less well-advised moves which they undeniably made, while of the Russian dispositions I could only judge from the results, and these were for the best part of the time, up to the end of November, in the main favourable for the defenders.

It may be argued that the Russians, being the whole time on the defensive, and holding very strong positions, were so much more favourably placed than the Japanese, that this was only what could be expected, and to a certain degree this is undoubtedly true. Not only had the Japanese to take the offensive, but the whole arrangement of the fortifications, mutually supporting each other, and with both wings established on the shores of the sea, made any turning movement impossible, and forced the Japanese everywhere and always to make frontal attacks. This naturally made their task the more difficult.

On the other hand, it should be remembered

that besieging armies have certain advantages which to a great extent make up for the greater difficulty of their task. The most important of these is that they always have it in their power to choose their own time. They can take troops which have had hard work, or suffered heavy losses, out of the fighting line, and send them to resting camps outside of the enemy's fire to recuperate. They are the whole time receiving reinforcements to fill the gaps in the ranks and infuse new blood and fresh spirits into the battle-worn army. The attacking party has the initiative; he can force the enemy to fight when circumstances are in his favour, when everything is prepared, and his men well rested and ready for the fray, while the defenders have to accept battle whenever it suits their adversaries; they can never allow themselves a real rest, unconcerned and free from anxiety; they must ever be on the alert, ready to meet any move on the part of the besiegers, and they are never reinforced; they see one comrade after another fall out of the steadily dwindling ranks, and there is never a new face to cheer them and help them to bear their burden and ease the heavy strain.

These advantages, more or less common to all offensive operations, are still more emphasized during a siege. The attacks are made by saps, which place the besiegers in nearly as favourable a position as that of the defenders. The latter are compelled, in order to stop or obstruct the progress of the attacking forces, to constantly take the offensive and deliver counter-attacks which must be carried out across the open, so that the rôles of the opponents to some extent are reversed. With his superior forces, if he does not try to rush matters, but advances

methodically by approaches and parallels, an attacker is always bound to reach his goal in the end, unless the defenders are reinforced or his own resources in men and guns are limited; it may take weeks, or it may take years, but the result must inevitably be the same, and the knowledge of this is a moral factor of the greatest import. Add to this that he is better fed, better clothed, and in constant communication with his home and with the outside world, and the disparity between the advantages of besieged and besieger to a great extent disappear.

But although this, I think, must be universally acknowledged, and although, as I have shown, Port Arthur was not nearly as strong a fortress as was generally believed, I hold that the capture of Port Arthur was a very fine accomplishment, which is to the greatest credit of the third army, and adds a new leaf to the many laurels which the Japanese have won in this war. The Russian defence was exceedingly well carried out, and their soldiers fought with the greatest bravery and contempt of death. Not a step forward could the Japanese gain without having to pay for it with enormous sacrifices. Although no official returns have as yet been published in Tokyo, I have it on excellent authority that the total Japanese losses in front of Port Arthur amounted to 105,000 men, including killed, wounded and sick, and as the total besieging force at the time of the capitulation was 97,000 strong, General Stoessel thus had to fight successively no less than 200,000 men.

This large army he kept in check for seven months, preventing it from taking part in the operations against Kuropatkin. This should always be remembered when the balance of General Stoessel's account is made up.

But the more brilliant and stubborn the defence, the more commendable is, of course, the attack which overcame it. What is it, then, that has made the Japanese victorious everywhere, when the reason cannot be found in the weakness of their opponents? What is it that everywhere has made their advance so irresistible? These questions, which naturally present themselves to everybody who has followed the events of the war, many have tried to answer. Some critics have been most impressed with the excellence of the Japanese army organization, others with their wonderfully efficient Intelligence Department, some are most struck with the minuteness with which every detail has been planned and carried out in all their operations, others have found the solution of the question in the moral and physical qualities of the officers and men.

All this is correct, all these factors contribute to the excellence of the Japanese army, but some points carry more weight than others, and there is one which, in my eyes, outshines them all, and more than anything else explains the success of the Japanese in the war.

The organization of their army is formed completely on German lines, and the system has in this war stood its first practical test admirably; it would, however, be too long to go into details here.

As to the Intelligence Department, I understand that it has been remarkably well informed concerning everything that had reference to the troops of the enemy, his dispositions, and the scene of operations at the other theatres of war, but the same cannot be said of this branch of the service at Port Arthur. Not only were the Japanese wrongly informed as to the strength of

the garrison, which at the beginning of the siege they estimated at less than 20,000 men, but they were also completely uninformed or misinformed regarding the strength, the construction, and the disposition of the fortifications, a fact which, as I have pointed out on several occasions, led to very serious mistakes in the tactics adopted. The explanation of this is probably that, at the outbreak of the war, the fortifications of Port Arthur were in a very unfinished state, the greater part not being then in existence at all. After the first attack of the fleet on February 9th, the Russians of course took measures to prevent any information regarding them from leaking out.

The Japanese have certainly in all their undertakings "prearranged"—to use the common expression—everything, down to the minutest details, in a way which is unique in the history of war, and it is certain that this completeness of their arrangements, where nothing has been forgotten and everything has been thought of and planned beforehand, goes a long way to explain the success of everything they set themselves to do. I could mention hundreds of instances to bear out my statement, but I shall confine myself to a single case, the first that came under my observation during the war.

On the evening of February 8th the Japanese landed their first troops on Korean soil, at Chemulpo. Four transports carried the troops from Japan. The harbour of Chemulpo, with its thirty feet tide, is such that steamers have to anchor a couple of miles from the jetty. In order to secure a speedy landing, the transports carried with them on deck a number of barges, each with a holding capacity of from 60 to 100 men; a

certain number of steam pinnaces from the war-ships towed the barges in.

On arriving at the landing pier the soldiers alighted with their kit and their arms and were drawn up on the jetty. Here they were counted off in batches of ten, twelve, or twenty men, and, under the command of a non-commissioned officer, dispatched to the different places in the town where quarters had been arranged for them. Each non-commissioned officer received a slip of paper with some writing in Japanese characters, and although he had never been to the place before, there did not seem to be any hesitation on his part where to direct his men.

I followed one of these small detachments through the streets, where in the meantime big lanterns of the ordinary Japanese kind, of white paper with large red Chinese characters, had suddenly appeared in front of every house; it was quite an illumination. Guided by these lanterns and his slip of paper, the commander without hesitation took his men along the bund and into the main street, then after a while turned into one of the side streets, and from there into another, where he halted in front of one of the houses. The men were dismissed and stepped in; they took off their kit and piled their arms. Two minutes after, they were sitting on the floor, smoking and chatting, as much at home as if they had lived in the house all their lives. Four battalions were landed in the course of the evening, everything working like clockwork; there were no loud words of command, no shouting, scarcely a word spoken; half-a-dozen school-girls would have made more noise than all these 4,000 men put together.

Besides the men, several horses and large supplies of provisions, hospital stores, and ammunition were brought ashore, and the way this was done was still more remarkable. As if by magic, the Bund suddenly became crowded with army coolies in their easily recognizable uniforms. Heaven only knows where they had sprung from, nobody had seen them before, they did not come from the ships, still, there they were. The most marvellous thing is that although, of course, the large Japanese population of Chemulpo must have known of the landing, and although all these army coolies must have been in the place for some time, the whole thing had been kept so completely secret. Nothing had leaked out, and not one of the Europeans in Chemulpo had the faintest notion of what every Japanese knew was about to happen.

Marvellous also was the way the provisions and the other stuff were landed and piled on the quay. Everybody concerned seemed to know which particular bags or cases he had to take hold of, and the exact spot where to take them. No instructions, as far as I could see, were given; but the coolies took up their burdens and carried them, some to one place, some to another, where other men stood ready to stack them. And the whole time not a word, not a sound, only the shuffling of many busy feet. The completeness and the minuteness of the "pre-arrangements" were far beyond anything I had ever seen or thought possible under similar circumstances.

But the most excellent organization, the most perfect intelligence service, and the most thorough "pre-arrangements" would be of little use, if the troops which were to fight the battles had not been of the right stuff, with officers capable of

making use of these advantages, and with soldiers doing their duty unflinchingly and intelligently. It is in the moral and physical qualities of the men, and still more in the high standing, the thorough training, and the great capability of the officers, that the real strength of the Japanese army is to be found.

Look at a company of Japanese infantry marching past. The men, small, but well set up, are all practically of the same height and the same build ; they all have black hair, split eyes, round heads, most of them snub noses, protruding cheek-bones and square jaws. They all resemble each other in face and figure, one sees that they belong to one race which has developed certain features, certain points common to every man to a much more marked degree than any of the European nations. The sight, therefore, gives one an impression of compactness, solidity, and regularity, as if one were looking at well-constructed machinery, where all the many small parts are perfectly homogeneous, and fit well into each other.

And so it is. The Japanese army of to-day is probably the most perfect engine of war that ever existed. The qualities which have been most highly developed in the Japanese race are just those which make good warriors. Physically, the men are strong, capable of enduring great hardships, very alert and agile, and at the same time as tenacious as bulldogs, with very healthy constitutions, which permit them to live on less, and what we would call poorer food (though luckily for them it is undoubtedly more wholesome) than any European army. Morally, they are the best disciplined soldiers in the world, very intelligent, and absolutely fearless ; they have

a genuine love for their country, on account of which they are immensely ambitious ; they regard their Emperor as a god, and their officers as his lieutenants, and willingly give their lives at a word from them. They are very proud of their profession, which gives them a right to fight side by side with the real Samurais, the ancient warrior-class of Japan, and they would rather die than do anything that could disgrace them. Their discipline is inborn, fostered by hundreds of years of living as an inferior caste under the sway of the Samurais, and their bravery is derived from, and supported by, their fatalism, their faith in their officers, and their reverence for their god-Emperor. Think of what the intelligent collaboration of 100,000 men, all practically of the same moral and physical qualities, forming an army of such unique homogeneity, will be able to accomplish under the guidance of competent officers, and one ceases to wonder at the Japanese successes.

Of the officers I cannot speak too highly, they are the real backbone of the army. Nowhere else in the world does one find all officers so devoted to their profession. After passing through excellent schools which give them a solid foundation for their work, they spend their lives in conscientiously striving to attain the highest efficiency. They are not pleasure-seeking or frivolous, and do not waste their time in trying to acquire knowledge which is of no value for their profession. They are always "at it," always studying, and they know their service to the smallest details. They treat their men kindly and share all their hardships. At Port Arthur they lived with their soldiers in dug-outs or in the trenches, on the same food and practically in the

same kind of clothes. They always *led* their men, and vied with them in volunteering for the more perilous tasks. They had no sentimental scruples in sacrificing lives where they considered it necessary, but then they did not hesitate in risking their own, always taking the lead and exposing themselves the most during the attacks and during the many smaller affairs which were just as hazardous and fraught with just as much danger.

"I wish I might die at the next attack," said a colonel to me, "it would be a most glorious death."

"But would it not be better to live and work for your country?" I asked. *Mon Dieu!* One has to say something.

"No," he said, very earnestly, "if I fall, there are hundreds of competent men ready to step in and take my place, but do you not see? If I fall here in front of Port Arthur—and remember there is no name under the sun which will ever be so famous to the Japanese as that of Port Arthur—my children and children's children for generations to come will rejoice in the obligation of living up to the standard set them by their forefather who died like a hero at Port Arthur, and the lustre attached to my name will be to them a peremptory *noblesse oblige* which will keep them from doing a bad or a mean act, and which will give to my country hundreds of brave and loyal citizens. Is not that worth any man's dying for?"

Thus spoke the colonel, and he meant what he said, though his wish was not fulfilled. What is more, as I know the Japanese officers, there is scarcely one who would not endorse his words. The soundness of his deductions may be discussed, but an army animated by such sentiments is

invincible. It is the Japanese officers who have made Japan victorious.

Out in the Far East a people of warriors, sailors, artists, and excellent artisans, with an old and in many respects highly developed culture, comes into contact with another people which has evolved along the completely different lines of Western civilization; it perceives that this other culture is superior to its own, and that to attain the same high standard it must relay the foundations of its whole national life. Endowed with a rare faculty of assimilation and discrimination, the people adopt what is found good and serviceable in the new culture, and succeed in really absorbing it and making it its own, building further along the new lines. In a wonderfully short space of time the change is made, the newly acquired civilization is digested and blended with their older culture, a renaissance the like of which the world has never seen is accomplished in less than half a century, lifting a semi-barbaric people to the level of the most accomplished of the Western nations.

The European renaissance in the sixteenth century was essentially spiritual, and was built on the foundations of the culture of a kindred people; the Japanese renaissance, on the other hand, is essentially practical, and based on the experiences and the development of completely alien nations. But there is one point which is common to both of these events, the enthusiasm by which the powerful movement is embraced by the whole nation, the energetic, persevering desire in all classes of the people to share in this development, working towards a well-defined and clearly understood goal, and the new strength, self-

confidence, pride, and ambition which this movement creates in the soul of the people. In an historic moment in a nation's life like this, all its best faculties are developed to their highest pitch; its energy and ambition leaps forth with an irresistible force, and it is able to perform wonders at whatever task it sets itself.

In Japan, so essentially a nation of warriors and sailors, and so essentially a practical people, it was only natural that it should first turn its attention to its military and naval development. A large number of officers were sent to the different countries of Europe to study the various branches of the service. One met them everywhere, at the important military centres, at schools, at manœuvres, in the naval yards. Polite, smiling, with suave manners, but with indefatigable working-power, always studying hard, seeing and observing everything with bright, judicious eyes, collecting an incredible number of facts, theories, and new ideas, and carrying home with them a mass of information which there was sifted and put in order to serve for the improvement and perfection of the army and the navy.

The principle of general conscription was adopted. Every man had to serve for his country, and took an immense pride in what he considered a great prerogative, because, as I have mentioned, the fighting formerly had been reserved for a privileged caste, the Samurais, of which his uniform now made him a member. With a full understanding of the magnitude of the present development in every direction, and the height to which especially the military and naval development has been brought, it is no wonder that the Japanese have thrown themselves heart and soul into the present war with a force, an enthusiasm,

an all-absorbing devotion which inevitably made them invincible. Other factors have contributed—the physical strength and soundness of the people; the sober, healthy life; the simple, rational diet, all of which have enabled them to stand the awful strain of a modern war. They have beaten the Russians, as I feel convinced they would have beaten any other army; and if, after the tension and the elation of the war is over, they can keep up to their present high standard, Japan is likely to become a world-power of the first magnitude. Considering what they have achieved, and the intellectual and physical qualities of the people, there is little doubt that the young-old nation has before it a great future.

There is only one danger—or shall we say hope?—for, in spite of all that has been said and thought by people who do not know the real conditions, the rise of Japan is a grave danger to European interests, not only in the Far East, but in all Asia—the only possibility, then, is that in accepting the Western civilization, the people will not, as hitherto, chiefly adopt only what is good and sound, but will also come to appreciate the less beneficial sides of Western modern life. Signs are not wanting that this may happen. Especially in places where there are large foreign settlements the wealthier classes of the people have begun to adopt the easier and more comfortable ways of living of the European, and even in the broader strata of the masses the pretensions to life have become greater; the people want more ease and more luxury, and, as life grows more pleasant, they grow less willing to give it up for the hard, dangerous life of a soldier. So far, signs are not numerous, though I have on several occasions spoken to soldiers, especially men of the 2nd

reserve, hailing from Yokohama, Kobe, Osaka, who were sick and tired of the war and only longed to be home again. One solitary event stands out very clearly to proclaim this danger to Japan; to wit, the refusal of a certain regiment to advance on the enemy, which I have mentioned in Chapter XI. This regiment came from one of the places in Japan where the domestic and social life has been most influenced by Western ways. With the greater prosperity which will follow after the war there is the possibility of the disease spreading. So far no alien people has come under the influence of Western civilization without losing more than it has gained. Japan is the only exception. Will it remain so?

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